BING

Summer
2018

No. 179

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:
Club: www.club-crosby.org
BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY

Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr. Mary Carlisle Blakeley - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Nick Clooney - Michael Feinstein - Rich Little - Regis Philbin

Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress - Spokane Public Library - Tacoma Public Library -

Magazine Editor
MALCOLM MACFARLANE
3 Osborne Close
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK
Tel: 01625 528942
e-mail: macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer
MICHAEL CRAMPTON
19 Carrholm Crescent
Chapel Allerton
Leeds LS7 2NL , UK
Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556
e-mail: mdcrampton@gmail.com

American Co-Editor
ANTON GARCIA-FERNANDEZ
133 Division Avenue
Jackson
Tennessee 38301, USA
Tel:(615) 8185159
e-mail: antongarciafdez@gmail.com

American / Canadian Representative
F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS
5608 North 34th Street
Arlington
Virginia 22207, USA
Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608
e-mail: wigbing2012@gmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative
DAVID CURRINGTON
34A Geoffrey Street,
Turramurra, New South Wales
Australia 2074
Tel: (02) 9440 2434
email: davecurro@tpg.com.au

CONTRIBUTORS

American Contributors: David Lobosco / Martin McQuade / John Newton
British Contributors: J. Richard Baker / Ken Crossland / Jeremy Rose
Canadian Contributor: Gord Atkinson / Lorne Harasen **Australian Contributor:** Graham Pascoe

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2018 are:

USA and Canada	US $35 per annum
UK	£20 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£22 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$50 per annum
Rest of World	£23 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins

(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2018.

EDITORIAL

I was feeling a little despondent when I started to prepare these notes. No new releases were in sight, media mentions were becoming rarer, Bing was being heard less and less on the radio and a couple of radio presenters who regularly played our man had hung up their boots. Then, quite unexpectedly, I received a galley proof of Gary Giddins' new book "Swinging on a Star".

To say I was delighted is a major understatement. I was ecstatic and I devoured the book rapidly. Superbly written, it's a magnificent tome and in particular the chapter on Bing in France in 1944 is breath-taking! We have more information on a subsequent page but I urge you all to order your copy now. Amazon and also Barnes & Noble have it and no doubt many other booksellers too.

This issue of BING magazine is, as usual, packed with a diverse range of articles. Martin McQuade contributes various chapters including a review of the new *King of Jazz* Blu-ray issue. David Lobosco leads off the expanded Celluloid Crosby section with a look at *Rhythm on the Range*, Ken Crossland remembers a very dear friend and Jeremy Rose comes back to our pages with his thoughts on the 'Return to Paradise Islands' album. Lorne Harasen begins a series of articles about his interactions with Mr. Crosby, and Bob Phillips reports on an important development with the Crosby Building on Sunset Boulevard. Please spare a thought for Richard Baker as he scours the world for new releases in 'Keeping Track'. The 1972 Parkinson show receives close scrutiny in this edition, Marcos Callau, of Saragossa, Spain discusses the mutual admiration society of Bing and Frank Sinatra and there's lots more. Also, a first – no show-business obituaries in the "Once in a While" section.

By the way, Anton has moved house so please note his new address on the page opposite.

Copy date for our winter edition is October 25 but earlier submission is always appreciated. All contributions welcomed.

Malcolm Macfarlane macwilmslo@aol.com

Though I haven't been as fortunate as my fellow British Co-Editor to be able to read galley proofs for the second volume of Gary Giddins' biography of Bing, I echo his words of excitement and delight regarding the book's forthcoming publication. This new installment has been highly anticipated by all of us long-suffering Crosby fans who have waited for years and years for the good news of its release. Moreover, I have always been a great admirer of Mr. Giddins' writings on jazz and popular music, which I have followed for several decades now. Bing could never have hoped for a better biographer than Mr. Giddins, and like Malcolm, I encourage every

member to put the magazine down for a little bit and hasten to order their copy as soon as possible. And, of course, I offer my deepest gratitude to Mr. Giddins for taking on this mammoth task with such patience, thoroughness, and respect—Bing definitely deserves a biography of this caliber!

As Malcolm has mentioned, my wife, our 5-year-old daughter, and I have moved to a new address a few miles south of Martin, Tennessee, where I teach at the local university, so I have spent the past several weeks packing, unpacking, and watching the soccer World Cup! For that reason, you will not find an article signed by me in this issue. I have been working on a piece about the collaboration between Bing and Count Basie, but unfortunately I wasn't able to finish it in time for inclusion in this issue; it will be published, however, in the winter issue. As usual, this time around we offer our members loads of information about our man Bing, and the magazine is once again packed with extremely interesting and relevant articles, for which I would like to thank all contributors, without whom *BING Magazine* would not be possible.

Finally, I would like to say a few words of introduction about the piece written by my friend Marcos Callau, of Saragossa, Spain, regarding the mutual admiration established between Bing and Frank Sinatra throughout their careers. Author of one of the foremost blogs on Sinatra in the Spanish-speaking world, Mr. Callau is one of the most knowledgeable writers on Ol' Blue Eyes in Spain and has long been an admirer of Crosby, whose influence on a young Sinatra is undeniable. Mr. Callau wrote this article originally in Spanish, and my wife and I subsequently adapted and translated it into English for inclusion in the magazine. I hope all members enjoy this and all the other pieces in this summer issue!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez antongarciafdez@gmail.com

CONTENTS

Page Nos.

Editorial 3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report. 4
Catherine Anne Ferguson 1934-2018 5
Ernest Sutkowski 5
Crosby Building for National Historic Register . . 6
Bing Crosby in "The Road to Rock 'n' Roll" 7
Bing 'grand marshal' of St. Patrick's Day Parade 8
Baseball Is Back!. 8
Going My Way in Warrington 8
Drifting and Dreaming on Governors' Island 9
Swinging on a Star – The War Years 1940-1946 . 10
Return to Paradise Islands 11
Bing and Frank, a Mutual Admiration Society . . . 14
The Harasen Line 17
Trading Post 18
Books 'N' Bing 19
This Road Leads to Carnegie Hall 22
Bing on Parkinson 24
Celluloid Crosby 29
This is the Future 31
Bing Crosby – Swinging on a Star 33
Cinerama's Russian Adventure 38
Beverly Washburn's favorite co-stars 39
One Sweet Letter from You 41
Ken Crossland's Crosbyana 43
A Note from Australia 45
Bing on the Box 47
The Way We Were 50
Keeping Track 53

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

I would like to begin my report by thanking member Nicholas Morrison for his exceptional generosity in providing the funds that ensure we continue with a colour magazine, at least for another year. Members have welcomed the change to colour but an extra £285 per year is needed if we are to continue with this much admired magazine feature.

In May, my wife Judy and I visited Washington DC and had the pleasure of catching up with our US/Canadian representative Wig Wiggins. I was delighted to find Wig sprightly, upbeat and considering his recent devastating accident in very good spirits belying his 89 years. Every day Wig takes his morning walk but always with an eye to the road aware that at any time a lorry might back up and discharge its load towards or on him. Wig was very pleased to show us his garden where we saw a wonderful show of Azaleas which had been planted by his late and dear wife Laura (see photo on page 40).

Wig and I discussed the club's future and concluded that with declining membership we will soon have to decide how we can remain viable and yet give good service to members. Two magazines per year is one option and we would both appreciate member suggestions as how best to go forward as our membership decreases. Please send your suggestions to Wig and I.

Summer is traditionally a lean period for Bing news and so it has proved to be in 2018. However, as Malcolm has highlighted, we have Gary Giddins' second volume to look forward to and there are always our collections to turn to seek out those unplayed songs and perhaps videos unplayed for many years?

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that they will derive much interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club.

UNITED STATES

Kevin Doherty (Cherry Hill, New Jersey), Tim Weldon (Palos Park, Illinois), Jason Whiton (Mill Valley, California)

UNITED KINGDOM

Jonathan Cowley (Coleshill, Birmingham)

DONATIONS

Our generous benefactors continue to support the club with their financial gifts and we are very pleased to acknowledge the very welcome additional sum of £1,560 contributed by the members listed below. We are indebted to them.

CANADA

Barry Birch, Alan Matheson, Britton C. Smith

GERMANY

Klaus Halm (Berlin)

UNITED KINGDOM

Nicholas Morrison, John Salisbury, Barbara Holmes, John Walton, Mr J Cook, David B Newbold.

UNITED STATES

Honorary Members - Nick Clooney and Michael Feinstein,

Members - Howard Crosby, Joseph Clay, James Clifford, Theresa Cretella, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Anthony DiFlorio, Stanley Diebel, Laurence Doyle, Ron Field, David Foe, Arne Fogel, William Fowler, Jeff Freeman, Bill Galletta, Rev. Jerome Heyman, John Holland, Mike Keiser, Laurence Kieran, David Lobosco, Paul Murphy, Edward Press, Ronald Reichman, Mike Reilly, Rev. Eugene Roberts, Greg Russo, Judy Schmid, Richard Shoemaker, Wayne Stankowski, Dale Thielker, Phillip Turfle, Greg Van Beek, Elisa Van Riper, Charles Vincent, Ben Whiteley, Ken Winters

DEATHS

We are very sorry to report the deaths of the following members:-

UNITED KINGDOM

Johnny Joyce (Wolverhampton) 92, Stan Mayor (Cheadle, Cheshire), Vic Coleclough (Saffron Walden, Essex) 97, Gwen Harvey (Farnborough, Hampshire) 94,

Johnny Joyce was a redoubtable Crosby Collector with an interest in Bing's music going back to the 1930s. In 2005 he made a private CD to acknowledge the contribution his friend Gordon Wall had made to Crosbyana and to salute Gordon as one of the all-time great collectors. See also Ken Crossland's Crosbyana article in this issue.

Gwen Harvey was a dedicated Bing enthusiast and attended many Leeds dinners before the journey became too demanding for her. Gwen's dedication, enthusiasm and collecting of Bing memorabilia was well known and she inspired others to collect too! Please see Trading Post for details of her collection.

UNITED STATES

Ernest Sutkowski (Saddle River, New Jersey), Irene Poulin (Monroe, New Jersey), Robert Hartfield (Burr Bridge, Illinois), Bill Hays (Prescott Valley, Arizona), Robert Larsson (Newington, Connecticut), Ernest Nagy (Burbank, California), Tom O'Donnell (Venice, Florida)

Our sincere condolences are extended to family and friends.

BING CROSBY ON CD

This is my usual reminder that the following single CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £9.50 and the rest of the world £10.50. The price for the double CD is £9.50 UK, £11.50 Ireland & Europe, £15 for rest of the world.

Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 4, 8, 9 and 10

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

THE ROAD TO HONG KONG – SAY ONE FOR ME

BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.

JOIN BING & SING ALONG (2 CD SET)

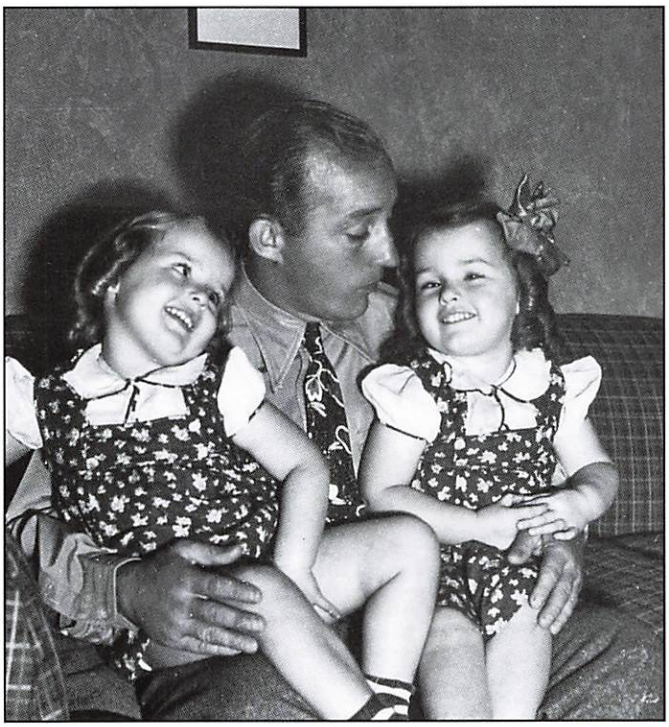
Until winter, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton mdcrampton@gmail.com

Catherine Ann Ferguson 1934-2018

Howard Crosby wrote to give me the sad news that his sister and Bing's niece, Katie, died on May 11 of a stroke while vacationing with her husband of 62 years, Bob Ferguson. Bing was her godfather.

Katie and her twin Helen Dolores were born on May 18, 1934 to Ted Crosby and his first wife Hazel. When they were born, Ted wrote Bing "You have to have three of a kind to beat a pair of queens." When Bing's twin sons were born a month or two later, Bing cabled Ted "A pair of kings arrived today." Sadly Ted's marriage to Hazel foundered in 1946.



Bing with Katie and her twin sister, circa 1937

In 2003 at the Gonzaga Centenary Celebration, your Editor had the great pleasure of meeting Katie, and her husband Bob, who was accompanying her with their daughters Cathy and Colleen, and Katie's grandchildren, Ashley and Michael. Katie talked about how difficult it was for their mother after the separation from Ted. She will always be grateful to Bing because every Christmas for ten years after the split, her mother received a check for $300 from Bing which was a useful sum in those days and it really made a difference to them.

Katie was a renowned educator for over 43 years. She taught at Christ the King Elementary School in Richland, Washington to generations of students, all of whom still remember their "linking verbs" and certainly know the definition of a predicate nominative. She was also the first lay person to serve as Principal of Christ the King. In 2006, Katie was the recipient of the prestigious "Marie Rose Award" in recognition of her many years of commitment and dedication to Catholic education.

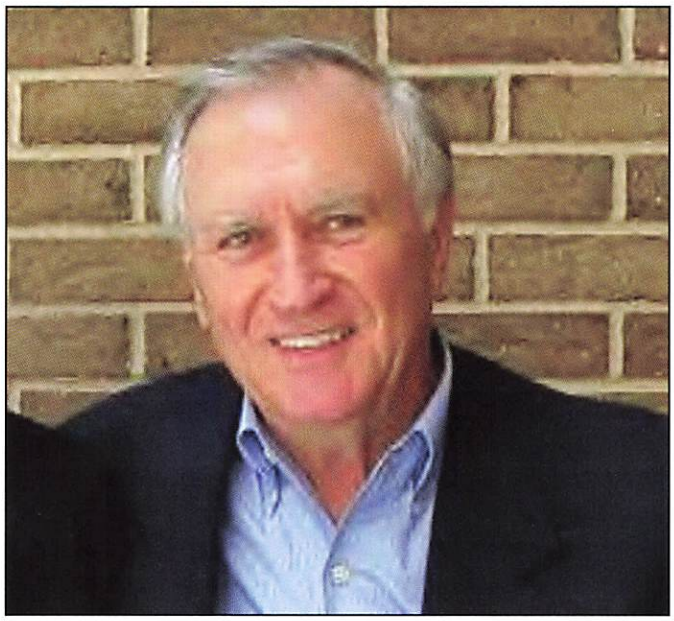
A funeral Mass was held at Christ the King Church, Richland on Saturday, May 19th at 1PM. Twin sister Helen Dolores had predeceased Katie in 2007.

Ernest Sutkowski

Long-time Crosby enthusiast and supporter Ernest Sutkowski died on March 26. He was 86. For many years he sponsored a long running Crosby radio show in Westchester, New York which was hosted by his son, the

singer Joe Francis. He was a consistent supplier of Crosby CDs (often via Stan White) to many radio presenters both in the USA and the UK, including the late Alan Dell who visited Ernest in New Jersey. Les Gaylor was another who was royally entertained by Mr. Sutkowski in the States. For many years, Ernie used to send out a Christmas CD to a host of friends containing many rare items, including Bing of course.

In business, he had worked his way up the hard way eventually becoming President of The Westchester Business Institute in 1973, which became The College of Westchester in 2003, and he served as Chairman Emeritus of the Board for The College of Westchester for the rest of his life



Ernest Sutkowski at Hofstra in 2002.

Mr. Sutkowski had a B.S. degree in Business Education from Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) and was a star athlete in baseball, basketball and football. A keen golfer, Ernest was also a devout Catholic and an active member of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Saddle River, NJ.

Your Editor first met Ernie at a Crosby meeting in London in the 1980s and my wife and I had a memorable evening with him and his daughter and son-in-law at an Italian restaurant in New York in the late 1990s. We met up with him again at the Hofstra conference in 2002. A sad loss and we send our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Bing Crosby Building Nominated for National Historic Register

We were very pleased to see this announcement on May 18 in WeHoVille News and here's the background to it from ICC member Bob Phillips.

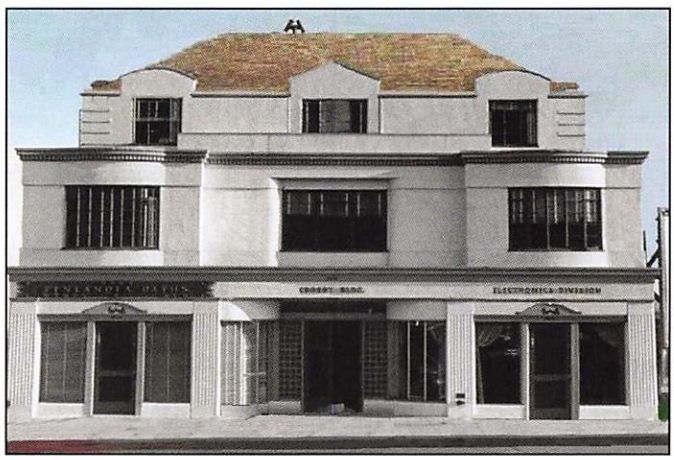
As you may know last summer I sent to the State of California the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Crosby Building on the Sunset Strip. After a couple of editorial changes, it was nominated to be considered by the State Historical Resources Commission at its meeting on 17 May. What appeared to be a rather straight forward meeting was changed at the last hour by the owner filing an objection to the nomination. Fortunately I was in Palo Alto, California where the State meeting was held and was able to present testimony before the commission as to why the building should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The commission voted unanimously for granting the national listing. The State has sent it on to the National Park Service which grants the national status. Since the owner objected, it will be listed as "eligible for National Status." However, the State of California will list it as a State Historic Place without any restrictions.

The building was granted status in Categories A, B and C:

Category A - Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. This building was the primary office of Bing Crosby and the location where the first video tape recorder was developed.

Category B - Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. The people were Bing Crosby and John T. (Jack) Mullin.

Category C - Property has distinctive characteristics and high artistic values.



The Crosby Building looking south in the early 1950s.

I used a number of references from the ICC in justifying the nomination along with inputs from Gary Giddins. I also used my two First Hand History entries on the EWHW (IEEE History Web Site) as references (mostly for the video tape recorder) and an architect's report on the building (since I am not an architect).

The proceedings in which I testified were televised and can be found at:

http://cal-span.org/unipage/index.php?site=cal-

span&owner=CSHRC&date=2018-05-17&target=

The Crosby Building presentation starts at 3:08:45.

It has been a long journey that the IEEE and I started several years ago to get recognition for the building and people that played a key role in the development of video tape recording as well as Bing Crosby.

Bob Phillips

The report in *WeHoVille News* on May 18 gave some more information.

The California State Historical Resources Commission voted this week to nominate the Bing Crosby Building in West Hollywood for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The vote at the commission's May 17 meeting was unanimous among the seven members present.

From 1936 to 1977 the building, which is at 9028 Sunset Blvd., was the headquarters for businesses operated by Bing Crosby, one of the 20th century's most popular singers and movie stars.

A recent photo of the Bing Crosby building at Sunset Blvd.

During that time, two groundbreaking technologies were developed in the building. In the late 1940s, engineers employed by Crosby perfected audiotape recording for commercial use. A few years later they invented a game-changing technology: videotape recording. These innovations revolutionized the music, film and broadcasting industries in the latter half of the century.

The Crosby Building also housed the Finlandia Baths, a spa that was popular with famous local residents like Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre and Rock Hudson.

In the City of West Hollywood Commercial Historic Resources Survey conducted in 2016, the Crosby Building was assessed as eligible for historic designation at the local, state and federal levels. This was a rare "trifecta" among the dozens of buildings that were evaluated for the report.

Today the building fronts a 1.3 acre property owned by the Charles Company, a real-estate development firm. Last fall the company announced plans to build a 19-story hotel on the site. In a rendering of the proposed hotel project published by WEHOville in October the Crosby Building is shown intact, even if apparently stripped of existing, original ornamental details.

On Wednesday, WEHOville reported that Arman Gabay, co-founder of the Charles Company, had been arrested on federal bribery charges. How, or whether, Gabay's arrest will affect the project's future is unclear.

In the run-up to the commission hearing this week, Gabay's representatives sent a notarized letter to the Historic Resources Commission objecting to the nomination – a move that could prevent the building from a full listing in the National Register of Historic Places, relegating it instead to an "eligible" category. However, in a subsequent email the developer notified the commission that it would not send a representative to advocate against the nomination.

As a result of the objection, the Crosby Building's nomination was moved from the consent calendar to later in the session. During the public comments after a presentation by commission staff, no one spoke against the nomination.

Instead the commission heard from **Robert Phillips**, who worked on development of recording technology for Crosby at the building in the 1950s and who has spearheaded the historic status designation effort for the building. It was he who prepared the 39-page nomination document for the building, which he submitted to the commission last summer.

In his remarks, Phillips said he felt compelled to advocate for historic designation for the building because he is "the last one left" from Crosby's recording technology development team.

Phillips was in West Hollywood last week and conferred with the WHPA board.

Jon Ponder

(Editor: Our hearty congratulations to Bob Phillips for a great job which will help to keep Bing's name alive for future generations. The amount of work undertaken by Bob over the years has been immense and we thank him for undertaking this demanding task.)

Bing Crosby in "The Road to Rock 'n' Roll"

Ken Crossland enthusiastically reviewed this BBC Radio2 show in BING #177 (winter, 2017, page 39) and we have been delighted to learn that it won Gold in 2 categories at the New York Festivals Radio Awards 2018 including one for 'Best Writing'. Co-producer Lewis Borg-Cardona received the awards and made an

excellent speech which can be seen on YouTube at: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdL4XfhWARI&feature=youtu.be** (check from 13'12" in).

Some very good publicity for Bing and congratulations to all concerned.

Bing named 'grand marshal' of St. Patrick's Day Parade in Spokane

Chad Sokol writing on Spokesman.com on March 17 gave details.

Bing Crosby had a wee bit of Irish in him. The late singer's mother was a second-generation Irish-American.

That heritage was enough to earn Crosby the title of grand marshal of this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Spokane.

His nephew, Ed Crosby, will ride alongside a cutout of Bing during the parade, while a selection of his Irish songs plays over the loudspeakers. The parade will begin at noon and is expected to run until about 3 p.m. It will be the 40th annual parade organized by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick….

Another nephew of Bing Crosby, Howard Crosby, has said his uncle was proud of his Irish roots. And in 2013, an Irish historian claimed he had found Crosby's ancestral home – the town in County Cork, Ireland, where Bing's maternal great-grandfather was living in late spring 1831. The historian, Noel Buckley, thought the site could make a popular tourist attraction, according to the Irish Examiner.

McLaughlin said Saturday's parade will feature advertisements for the museum at Bing Crosby's childhood home near Gonzaga University, which has hundreds of items of memorabilia.

"A lot of people don't know that his house is here in Spokane," McLaughlin said. "His actual house – this isn't one that someone dug up and moved here."

Chad Sokol

Baseball Is Back!

Major League Baseball's 2018 regular season began on March 29, and MLB Network released new video promos imagining what heaven would be like for fans who are passionate about the game. Set to Bing's "Cheek to Cheek," the humorous spots featured MLB Network analysts John Smoltz, Jim Thome, Al Leiter, Dan Plesac, Harold Reynolds, Kevin Millar, Mike Lowell and Carlos Pena living in a world where it's all baseball, all the time.

Going My Way in Warrington

Jason Liddiard reports on his latest branch meeting

April 7th, 2018 was a dull and wet day here in the North-West of England, but Bing and Fred Astaire's rendition of *Spring, Spring, Spring* (lyrics by Johnny Mercer) soon had the sun shining and daffodils tapping at the window hoping to get in on the action!

The April theme continued with *April in Portugal*, from the 1961 *Holiday in Europe* LP and left us wishing for a future deluxe release of said album by Bing Crosby Enterprises.

Member Mark Spry was not able to attend this time, so we played one of his favourites: *Muddy Water*, recorded by Bing in 1927 with Paul Whiteman accompaniment. (We're thinking of you, Mark!)

First film clips this time were *Style* and *Mr Booze*, from a 2015 Blu-ray release of the 1964 Warner Bros. production *Robin and the Seven Hoods*.

Bing demonstrates his style with Dean and Frank.

Our review of the radio scene led to a spin of *Bob White* from 1937, featuring Bing with Connee Boswell and John Scott Trotter's orchestra, heard recently on the Internet radio station Great American Songbook.

The 'News and Reviews' section included a review of some of the tracks from the wonderful *Among My Souvenirs – More Treasures from the Crosby Archive*, released by BCE towards the end of 2017. Sample tracks played were *Please*, from a Paramount Pictures radio promotion disc (worth the price of the CD alone) followed by *Dream a Little Dream of Me*, recorded by Bing for General Electric in April 1954 but not used in a broadcast. Next up was *Among My Souvenirs* from the

Crosby-Clooney Show of February 1960 - a fine reading indeed by Mr C. Further requests from this superb release included *Eternally*, the theme from the 1953 film *Limelight* with music by Charlie Chaplin, and Bing working out his version of *The NATO Song*, which remained locked-up in the Crosby vault for more than fifty years. Truly this CD release is a must have for all Crosbyites!

The March 27th release of the *King of Jazz* on Blu-ray did not arrive in time for our spring Bing meeting, so we will include it in our summer programme.

Our next film clip might seem out of place at a Bing meeting, as it came from the 1954 Alfred Hitchcock film *Rear Window*. Of course, it was the clip that includes Bing singing *To See You is to Love You* in the background.

We like to change things around at our gatherings and try new things. A new feature this time was 'The Crosby Dozen', twelve songs we hadn't played at any previous meetings (with one exception) and featuring Bing through the years, from *Beautiful Girl* to *Hang Me, Oh Hang Me.* Regular attendee Michael Crampton agreed to compile his 'Crosby Dozen' for next time. (Looking forward to it, Michael!)

Our 'Centenaries' spot, where we highlight performers with a connection to Bing whose 100th anniversary falls in 2018 focused on Skitch Henderson and Patty Andrews. Research diligently compiled and presented by Keith Richmond. Nice job, Keith, and we are looking forward to hearing about the next subjects.

Sandwiched between the two centenary spots was a refreshment break and special celebration cake to mark Malcolm Macfarlane's 25 years as editor of BING magazine. On behalf of ICC members everywhere, Malcolm, we thank you for your dedication.

We then settled down to watch a film and TV compilation of Bing through the years, from *The Stein Song* to *Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head.*

Our spring Bing meeting came to a close with Bing's 1944 rendition of *I'll Remember April*. Those of us in attendance certainly will!

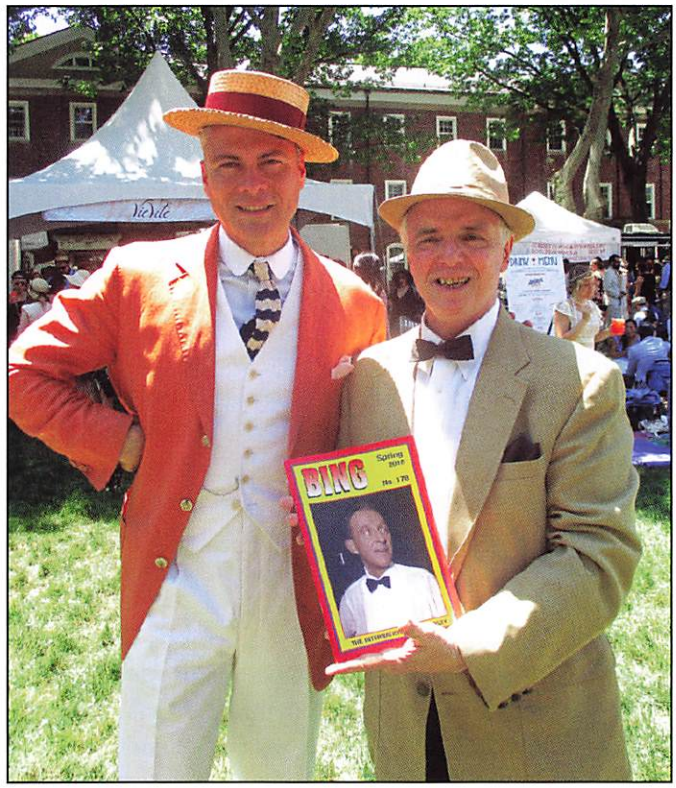
Next meeting already in the calendar for July 14th, which I hope will be some sunny day and not a sleigh ride in July…

Jason Liddiard email:jkl@galleryjkl.com

Drifting and Dreaming Once Again on Governors' Island

Martin McQuade has been to a very special party.

Flappers and sheiks prone to triskaidekaphobia need not have refrained from attending the joyously nostalgic 13th annual Jazz Age Lawn Party held on June 16th on Governors' Island in New York Harbor. Once again host Michael Arenella led his Dreamland Orchestra, playing classics from the late 20's. Among the highlights were "I'm Coming Virginia" and "Coquette" which Michael crooned in front of a standing vintage microphone on the main stage.



Martin (right) and Michael Arenella discuss the latest BING magazine

Out on the expansive lawn, surrounded by purveyors of vintage paraphernalia, Drew Nugent (profiled in BING # 176) and his Midnight Society band regaled the throngs with Crosby chestnuts "Street of Dreams," Mary (What Are You Waiting For?)" and, new to this year's appearance, "Susianna."

Regularly serving as a mood-setting late morning preamble for each Gatsby-era pilgrimage are the 78-RPM recordings that emanate from the horn of the antique Victrola, courtesy of "Phonograph DJ" Rob Vrabel. This reporter leapt from his seat and approached Rob upon hearing "'Taint So, Honey 'Taint So," featuring Bing's scintillating vocal. After the spinning of the Paul Whiteman Potato head label, Rob consented to share his comments.

Bing is fantastic. He, along with Louis Armstrong, invented jazz singing, as we know it. Before that everything was somewhat staid and novelty. It wasn't swinging or bluesy or flexible or anything. When "Pops" and Bing came along, right about the same time, they essentially gave a completely new modern sort of inflection to singing and showed how to improvise a lyric in a jazzy sort of way.

Bing came along at about the time electric recording came along. He didn't have to belt it out the way Al Jolson or Irving Kaufman would have. So he could sing in a more intimate and relaxed way. It wasn't so over-

the-top. There was more fluidity to it. It wasn't stiff.

Bing never sang the lyrics straight. He always added his own particular touches to it. He treats the song, runs it in his head and puts it over in a way that is respectful of the original composer's intent but with his own unique phrasing and articulation. Other Bing records I like to play are "You Took Advantage of Me," Ol' Man River," "I'm Gonna Get You" and "One More Time."

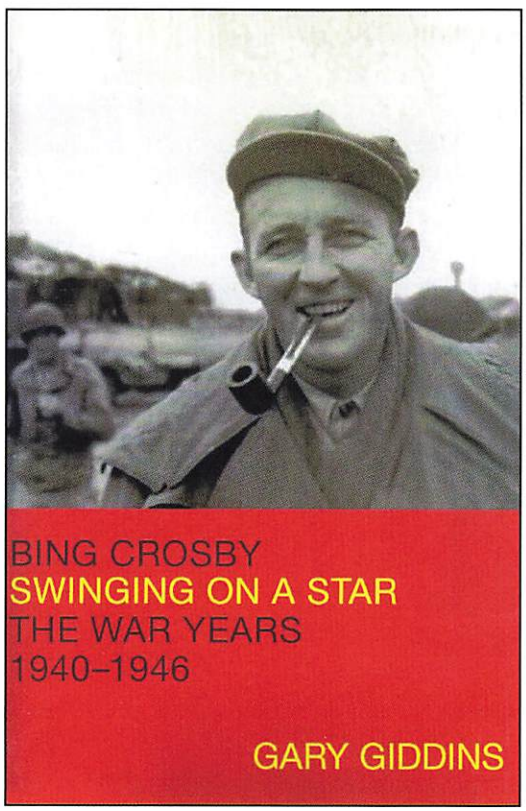
When Bing became more commercial, he toned it down a little bit. He wasn't so bluesy is the best way I can phrase it.

Rob mostly plays his 78's in the Lehigh area in Pennsylvania, where he lives. *I play for dances and listening parties, as we call it, where I play, for instance, some Benny Goodman records and talk about his impact on music, ushering in the swing era. I'm over the moon for kind of this music. I always try to get younger people interested, although I'm not even that old. It's an uphill battle. Many young people at JALP perhaps don't have a serious, genuine long-term interest. Naturally, there are many aficionados, and I hope we can lure many more in for a deeper appreciation.*

Rob's missionary zeal is most encouraging, as is the entire JALP experience. The next manifestation takes place on the historic island just off Manhattan this August 25th and 26th. Once you've attended, return visits are never in doubt. Additional information is available at www.dreamlandorchestra.com

Martin McQuade martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com

Swinging on a Star – The War Years 1940-1946



In my Editorial, I mentioned my delight with this masterpiece of a book. The incredibly detailed research is bolstered by access to many personal letters from the war years which have been released by Kathryn Crosby. This book tells us far more about Bing's tremendous contribution to the war effort than we have ever known before and this was at a time when he was making his most successful films and records. The problems with his marriage and his relationship with Joan Caulfield are considered in depth. It's a book all of you will want and will find hard to put down.

Ken Crossland will review it in our next issue but in the meantime place your order as soon as possible. The book will be released in October.

Hardcover: 736 pages

Publisher: Little Brown and Company (30 Oct. 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316887927

ISBN-13: 978-0316887922

Available from Amazon - $40 in the USA, £30.20 in the UK.

Here is some of the advanced praise for the book.

A magnificent, monumental biography. Of course the chapters about Crosby in wartime England and France –Der Bingle – fascinated me most, not least his extraordinary mixture of showbiz courage, universal charm and absolutely hard driven energy. The ritual singing of "White Christmas" at the end of each show, producing that huge significant silence among the GIs, is a haunting image and told me something quite new about America at war. I was also impressed by the swift syncopated narrative, and the sly shifts between lyrical and analytical presentation. So how would I sum it up in a phrase? – a cultural biography to croon over!

Richard Holmes, author of *The Age of Wonder* and *This Long Pursuit*

I'm a huge fan of Bing Crosby, and this book blazed and boomed over my life like fireworks on the Fourth. Gary Giddins is a masterly biographer, a storyteller with a keen sense of exactly the right details. *Swinging on a Star* reads like a novel, and this volume is pure gold, if not platinum, spanning the key years in the life of this central figure in American culture. Bing comes alive in these pages, with a glorious cast to accompany him on his many roads to fame and fortune. A dazzling and brilliant biography.

Jay Parini, author of *Empire of Self: A Life of Gore Vidal*

Long-awaited, *Swinging on a Star* is the scrupulously researched companion to Gary Giddins's marvelous first volume on the life of Bing Crosby. And like its companion, it brims with music, movies, family drama, religion, love—and, now, war, when the master of jazz performed on a public stage to a country, and most particularly, an armed forces, in need of cheer. With loving precision, Gary Giddins documents those performances—and that man—so that we can participate, hearing as if for ourselves the compassion in Crosby's song; and witnessing, too, as if first-hand, just how this stoic, incomparable crooner became an American icon.

Brenda Wineapple, author of *Ecstatic Nation: Confidence, Crisis, Compromise*

What an astonishing act of narrative and scholarship Gary Giddins has performed. He has drilled deep into a complex, deeply flawed and extraordinarily talented human being and has brought back not only this fascinating figure but the age that shaped him and which he in turn helped to shape.

Ken Burns, filmmaker, *The Roosevelts* and *Vietnam*

Gary Giddins is the finest jazz critic of his generation and *Swinging on A Star* adds another splendid story to the literary mansion he is constructing for Bing.

Philip Norman, author *Paul McCartney: The Life*

Brilliant and unsurpassable: Gary Giddins's powers as a music critic, film scholar, and historian are all on display in *Swinging on a Star*, the much anticipated second volume of his Bing Crosby biography. Giddins zeroes in on the war years and richly documents Crosby's remarkable career as it reached its zenith as singer, actor, and canny business man, not to mention tireless star entertainer to our troops. He raised the morale of all of America and was beloved by millions. Der Bingle was a marvel and so is Giddins. He has captured one of the greatest molders of popular culture who ever lived and I couldn't put the book down; it is that engrossing. Bravo!

Patricia Bosworth, author of *The Men in My Life: Love and Art in 1950s Manhattan*.

Return to Paradise Islands

Jeremy Rose returns to our pages with a look at an album that is rarely discussed.

At the risk of instantly destroying any credibility I might have as a serious Crosby collector, I have to admit that until the BCE CD release of the album in 2010, I can honestly say I have no recollection of ever having heard Bing's 1963 album, "Return to Paradise Islands"! (RTPI)

I don't remember seeing copies of the LP in any of the second-hand record shops in London's Soho I used to frequent in the early seventies. (In those days I was picking up as many "Spokane" releases as I could afford - not many! - and gazing longingly at the occasional exorbitantly-priced "Bing's Hollywood" LP.) Neither can I find any re-release history prior to the BCE issue.

Having listened to it extensively and in some detail for the purposes of this article I have to admit that in my opinion it is not one of Bing's best efforts. Steven Lewis, in his survey of Bing's recordings on the old "Bing Crosby Internet Museum" rated the album a miserable D+, opining that Bing "fell flat on his face in this album" and advised listeners to "put your fingers in your ears". I certainly wouldn't go quite that far, but given the creative line-up assembled for the album, I do think it was a bit of a missed opportunity.

We all know Bing's affinity with the songs of the South Sea Islands, dating back to his first million-selling disc of "Sweet Leilani" in 1937, and it seems odd to me that he didn't take the opportunity to re-record at least one or two of the old hits. As it is, there is nothing on "RTPI" which can by any stretch of the imagination be called a "standard", despite the presence of some pretty heavyweight song-writing talent, and as far as I can ascertain, only two or three of the songs were ever covered by other artists.

It was recorded in Los Angeles over three separate sessions on 21st August *(The Old Plantation, Forevermore, My Tane* and *Love and Aloha)*, 16th October *(Frangipani Blossom, Lovely*

Hula Hands, Keep Your Eyes on the Hands and *The Hukilau Song)* and 9th December *(Home in Hawaii, Beautiful Kahana, Adventures in Paradise* and *Return to Paradise),* for Frank Sinatra's fledgling *Reprise* record label.

1963 was not a particularly busy year for Bing in the studio. Apart from a few tracks for the Sinatra/Reprise Musical Repertory Theatre albums and a couple of Christmas numbers, Bing's only other studio time that year was spent on the *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits* album, sessions for which were tucked in between the October and December *RTPI* sessions.

The working title for the album was *Moonlight Time in Old Hawaii,* but this was eventually jettisoned in favour of *Return to Paradise Islands.*

The arrangements and orchestral accompaniment were in the hands of the legendary Nelson Riddle. He and Bing had previously worked together when he conducted the orchestra for the commercial releases of *Man on Fire* and *Seven Nights a Week* in 1957. The year following *RTPI,* he arranged and conducted the soundtrack for "Robin and the 7 Hoods". As far as I can tell, these were their only recording studio sessions, although there were several TV collaborations and Nelson led the orchestra on Bing's memorable March, 1976 concert in Los Angeles.

For me, I'm afraid the Crosby/Riddle pairing is not a musical marriage made in hula-heaven. Riddle seems uninspired by the material, but then these are not great songs. We are certainly not in classic Sinatra/Riddle *Songs for Swingin' Lovers* territory here..!

As Fred Reynolds puts it in part 5 of *The Crosby Collection*, Riddle largely eschews his "characteristic driving basses (and) swinging reeds" and the arrangements are "totally removed from the traditional Polynesian style". They are tasteful, restrained and sophisticated - maybe a tad *too* sophisticated...

Fred considers the album to be, "...a good clutch of songs generally well sung and one that has been underrated." I think I'd go along with that. More or less..! Bing is in complete control of his vocal resources and seems to be having a good time. On the whole, though, I don't think there is enough variety of material or accompaniment to make listening to the album in one sitting a particularly rewarding experience. Each individual track has something to offer, though, and I'll do a brief (and highly subjective..!) appraisal of each one.

Return to Paradise

This number by Ned Washington and Dimitri Tiomkin was the title song of the 1953 Gary Cooper movie of the same name. Tiomkin was also responsible for the hugely successful theme songs from *High Noon* and *Friendly Persuasion.* This isn't in the same league, however, and although I don't think it's the ideal track to open the album, it's an attractive enough song. Bing's phrasing, technique and breath control are extremely impressive and Riddle's arrangement swoons and swirls along effectively. To my ears, though, it's just a little bit too slow and languid. Nat "King" Cole recorded the song in 1953 (also conducted by Nelson Riddle) and his very slightly faster tempo and more rhythmic arrangement make that version a little more effective.

The Hukilau Song

This was written by Jack Owens and it's a light-hearted, fun number. Bing sounds like he's having a good time, swinging along as only he can. The arrangement makes atmospheric use of a Hawaiian guitar, but other than that sounds rather four-square and "straight". (Mind you, the key-change into the second chorus is always an effective way of "lifting" a song..!)

The Old Plantation

I like this one. It's unashamedly nostalgic and sentimental. There are some nice melodic and harmonic progressions in an otherwise fairly straightforward arrangement and I like the (slightly tongue-in-cheek?) unresolved chord at the very end.

Lovely Hula Hands

This song by R Alex Anderson trips along amiably enough, but apart from the persistent percussion there is nothing in the arrangement which would suggest its Hawaiian origins.

(There is a version from 1941 on YouTube which has a double Bing connection. It is sung by Frances Langford - who cut a couple of sides with Bing in 1938 - on which she's accompanied by Dick McIntire and his Harmony Hawaiians, who accompanied Bing on many Hawaiian songs over the years.)

Love and Aloha

There is nothing like enough originality in this dreary song to sustain the painfully slow tempo, which prevents Bing from phrasing the lyrics effectively. He is not helped by the turgid, formulaic arrangement. Not a favourite..!

Keep Your Eyes on the Hands

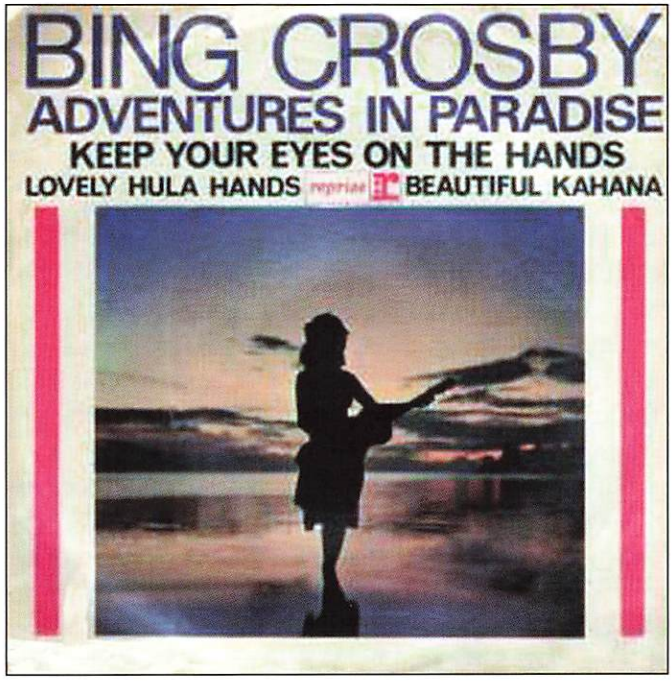
This Tony Todaro/Mary Johnston song featured

in the 1956 Jane Russell movie, "The Revolt of Mamie Stover". Ms Russell recorded it for commercial release, again with Nelson Riddle conducting.

Bing and Nelson's version swings along nicely at an ideal tempo with a very effective arrangement, making this one of the most successful tracks on the album. (Good to hear a few brief typically-Nelson-Riddle flute riffs in the arrangement, too!)

Adventures in Paradise

The melody for this number was originally composed by Hollywood arranger/conductor Lionel Newman as the theme tune for the early 60s American TV series of the same name. Lyrics were later added by Dorcas Cochran.



The atmospheric melody, sympathetic and tasteful arrangement, together with more wonderfully-controlled phrasing from Bing makes this one of the highlights of the album for me. (Incidentally, I think the considerable *technical* accomplishments of Bing's singing are sometimes overlooked. Maybe another article…)

Frangipani Blossom

Although perhaps not as memorable as the Oscar-winning songs penned by writers Livingston and Evans (*Buttons and Bows, Que Sera, Sera* and *Mona Lisa*) this attractive number has a nice relaxed swing to it. It's exactly the kind of lilting number that Bing did so effortlessly - laying on the back-beat, bending the melody and overall delivering a delightful performance.

Forevermore

This is a fairly generic Hawaiian love song by Milt Raskin and Charles E King, somewhat reminiscent of the *Hawaiian Wedding Song* made famous by Elvis Presley. It's none the worse for that, though, and Bing and Nelson Riddle present a very appealing rendition, ably supported by a discreet female chorus.

Farewell My Tane

I'm afraid that on this one I have to disagree with Fred Reynolds, who very much enjoys the song's "perfectly matched melody and lyrics in an instrumentally tasteful and varied arrangement that makes it superbly effective". To my ears, it's an uninspired song with a dull arrangement and a vocal contribution in which Bing sounds as if - for once - he's not completely sure what effect he's trying to achieve. Sorry…

Beautiful Kahana

Another song by Charles E. King, and the combination of a tasteful arrangement (with female chorus) and Bing's assured contribution raise this above the level of being "just another Hawaiian ballad". It's reminiscent of Bing's 1942 disc, "The Singing Sands of Alamosa", and I think that's my main problem with the album as a whole. With a couple of exceptions, the material just isn't individual enough…

And finally…

Home in Hawaii (King's Serenade)

Charles E King again, this time with lyrics by the illustrious, three-times-Oscar-winning lyricist Paul Francis Webster. I hate to end on a negative note, but I'm afraid there is nothing illustrious here, and I can only echo Fred Reynolds's opinion that, "It is easy listening, with Crosby's very relaxed delivery and a melodious orchestral interlude, but there is nothing in the song that hasn't been heard many times before".

(Incidentally, Webster's lyrics replace an earlier setting by Hal Aloma, when the song was known as *King's Serenade.* This version can be heard as a bonus track on the BCE 2010 CD re-issue.)

On its release in 1964, the album was generally well-received on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA, *Billboard* magazine said, "This 1964 version of Der Bingle is calm, relaxed and very much in tune with this South Seas material… Nelson Riddle's backings are fruitful and are certainly enough to make the old master and his vocal backings swing in the breeze."

In the UK, *Gramophone* magazine said that Bing, "…projects without any effort at all, just as

he has always done during the last thirty-eight years."

1964… Thirty-eight years of recording sessions behind him. Nearly fourteen years still to come…

As I said at the start, I don't consider *Return to Paradise Islands* to be a highlight of Bing's recorded legacy, but the fact that, after nearly forty years of recording sessions, he was still willing to seek out new projects and explore new challenges is surely one of the reasons we all hold him in such inestimable esteem.

As always when preparing these articles, I am acutely aware that I am standing on the shoulders of giants. Whenever I look up anything about Bing on Wikipedia, I can be almost *certain* that it's been written by Malcolm Macfarlane! *The Crosby Collection 1926 -1977* by Fred Reynolds is an invaluable resource, as are the meticulous discographies prepared and maintained by Wig Wiggins, Jim Reilly, Richard Baker, David Currington and the aforementioned Mr. Macfarlane. I hope those gentlemen will forgive me, however, if I express a nostalgic affection for my trusty old, *Bing - Just for the Record,* by Bert Bishop and John Bassett, which has been in my possession since it was first published in 1980.

I would also like to mention the very entertaining and informative notes provided by James Ritz for the 2010 BCE re-release of *Return to Paradise Islands.*

Thank you all…

Jeremy Rose

(Editor: It's a good job that Jeremy did not buy the original vinyl album because most Crosby fans were disappointed with it as Bing seemed to be drowned out by Nelson Riddle's backing orchestra. By accessing the original master tapes and re-mixing them for the CD release, Robert Bader presented the album as it should have been heard all the time and as a result, it became a much better proposition. Having said that, it's not Bing's most memorable album but it's grown on me over the years and I find it very pleasant listening.)

Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, a Mutual Admiration Society

Marcos Callau, of Saragossa, Spain, a friend of Anton Garcia-Fernandez, has submitted this article for the magazine. It was translated from Spanish by Anton and Erin Garcia-Fernandez to whom we give grateful thanks.

As a child growing up in the early 1980s, I listened to plenty of music coming out of the family record player. It was a mixture of current hits, such as Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, Dire Straits' *Brothers in Arms*, and Bruce Springsteen's *The River*; classical music; boleros; and even some vintage Italian pop hits from the '50s and '60s. But something was instantly different when I got to hear the voices of Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, something that drove me to their style of music. When I was seven and didn't understand a word of English, I was nonetheless able to sing "I've Got You under My Skin" almost word for word, owing to Sinatra's clear enunciation. I would listen to all kinds of music and artists, but as I reached adulthood, it became obvious to me that there were only two musical styles that interested me: first and foremost, jazz, and then everything else. Also, I understood that, for me, Sinatra was the vocalist par excellence, and my interest in his music has developed into an urge to study his figure and legacy. Of course, I often listen to other vocalists, namely Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday, to name just a few. However, and without a doubt, Bing Crosby's voice rises well above all of these. Had Sinatra never been born, Bing Crosby would have been my favorite singer, and in this article it is my intention to look at the personal and professional relationship that the two men established at different points of their careers.

Stating that Frank Sinatra became a singer because of Bing Crosby would be as erroneous as saying that Crosby decided to become an entertainer because of Al Jolson. Undoubtedly, the 14-year-old Crosby who discovered Jolson in Spokane was as mesmerized as was a teenaged Sinatra intently listening to Crosby's crooning. Such was Frank's devotion for Bing that, at age 17, he succeeded in sneaking into his idol's dressing room after a gig at the Newark Club to talk briefly with him. The story goes that Frank, after this fleeting meeting with Bing, confessed to his girlfriend, Nancy Barbato, "I want to be like him." Probably what Sinatra meant was that he wished to earn a living as a singer. This first meeting between the two most important vocalists of the twentieth century took place in 1933, and Frank, who by then was already singing with the Hoboken Four, entered that dressing room as a fan at a time when Crosby was at the top of his game. Though contemporaries, the two were 12 years apart, and that age different would turn out to be decisive.

Frank Sinatra's debut with the Harry James orchestra in 1939 is a musical milestone, but his subsequent tenure as featured vocalist with the Tommy Dorsey band would be even more meaningful. Bing Crosby had preceded Sinatra in using the microphone as an instrument, not only in the recording studio, but also on personal appearances. This was an important element

that helped usher in the figure of the crooner, and Crosby's more elegant style made him stand out easily above other contemporary singers such as Rudy Vallee and Eddie Cantor. Thus, when Sinatra entered the scene, with his impressive vocal range, he modernized Crosby's style via the Italian bel canto and a different kind of phrasing that would become a trademark of his much-imitated vocal style. Sinatra's singing may be described as timeless, but particularly in his early years with James and Dorsey, the influence of Bing Crosby is undeniable. As Sinatra struck out on his own in the 1940s, Crosby was already a well-established worldwide institution, appearing in as many as four films a year and boosting the morale of Allied troops during WWII. In fact, Der Bingle, as he became known in Germany, was recognized as the entertainer who contributed the most to the war effort, and soon he would record "White Christmas," the biggest-selling single of all time. The forties also mark a new height in Bing's popularity on the airwaves, and many of his radio appearances with the Andrews Sisters or Louis Armstrong are historical artifacts. Crosby was ubiquitous on records, radio, and movies at this time, but Sinatra was coming close on the heels of the master.

The famous occasion when Bing and Frank sang "People Will Say We're in Love" for a $20,000 war bond sale.

Owing to the huge success of both vocalists in the forties, the press began to present them as rivals. In 1943, the two men appeared in public together for the first time, singing "People Will Say We're in Love" as a way of poking fun at the journalists who constantly wrote about their rivalry. In reality, from the very beginning of Sinatra's career, Bing only felt admiration toward the kid that oozed with talent and self-confidence. Frank, of course, reciprocated these feelings and would do so throughout the rest of his career. Coincidentally, the early '50s brought a slump to the careers of both singers, right before the onslaught of rock'n'roll began. Sinatra severed his ties with Columbia Records, was rejected by part of the public due to his relationship with actress Ava Gardner, and Hollywood forgot him almost completely. These dark years are closely linked to his opposition to Senator McCarthy and his outspoken support of freedom of expression. But of course, the slump would come to an end following his Oscar-winning role as Maggio in 1953's *From Here to Eternity* and his promising recording contract with Capitol that would lead to the creation of some of his best jazz-inflected concept albums. Around this time, Bing Crosby turned in one of his best performances on film in 1954's *The Country Girl*, co-starring Grace Kelly and William Holden, and despite the slight decrease in record sales, he was in as good a voice as ever, recording excellent jazz albums and singing "Now You Has Jazz" with Louis Armstrong and "Well, Did You Evah" with Sinatra in the highly-acclaimed film *High Society*. Moreover, in 1957, they appeared together on television on two occasions: on *The Edsel Show* they perform several duets, and on the Christmas special, *Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank*, the good vibes and their friendship are apparent. This mutual admiration and respect comes to the fore during a radio show, when vocalist Dinah Shore remarks that Frank Sinatra is the type of singer that comes along once in a lifetime, to which Bing famously retorts, "Yes, Dinah, but why did it have to be *my* lifetime?"

JFK: A Heliport for the President

By the 1960s, Sinatra's audiences had grown up, and in many ways so had his music and his voice. At that time, interest in Crosby's recordings was sparked in sections of the record-buying public that felt a sort of nostalgia for days gone by. The U.S. was in the midst of social and political upheaval when John Fitzgerald Kennedy was elected President, and Sinatra was closely linked with the president's campaign, something that would lead to a series of minor misunderstandings between Frank and Bing. JFK had planned to visit the West Coast between February 24-26, 1962, and after talking to the White House on the phone, Sinatra was under the impression that his friend would stay with him in Palm Springs. Therefore, he had two houses built next door to accommodate the secret service, as well as a heliport that would remain unused for years. Roughly at the same time, Robert Kennedy had begun a crusade against the criminal underworld, and a recent report from the Justice Department mentioned Sinatra and cast him in a decidedly unfavorable light: "Sinatra has had a long and wide association with hoodlums and racketeers which seems to be continuing," states the report. "The nature of Sinatra's work may, on occasion, bring him

into contact with underworld figures but this cannot account for his friendship and/or financial involvement with people such as Joe and Rocco Fischetti, Paul Emilio D'Amato and Sam Giancana, all of whom are on our list of racketeers. No other entertainer appears to be mentioned nearly so often with racketeers. Available information indicates not only that Sinatra is associated with each of the above named racketeers but that they apparently maintain contact with one another. This indicates a possible community of interest involving Sinatra and racketeers in Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, Florida and Nevada."

With this report, the Justice Department brought attention to Sinatra's connection with Sam Giancana, overlooking the fact that it had been a factor that had helped JFK win the election. Moreover, on February 27, 1962, FBI agents informed J. Edgar Hoover about JFK's ongoing affair with Judith Campbell Exner, Giancana's current lover, which ended up involving Sinatra, since he had played a central role in introducing the president to Giancana and Exner. As a result, Robert Kennedy had Sinatra's head delivered to him on a silver platter, and when he informed his brother about the contents of these reports, he advised the president to avoid Sinatra and to stay with Crosby instead. It was Peter Lawford that was asked to break the news to Frank, and he proceeded to tell Sinatra that JFK would be staying with Crosby because his house, which stood right behind a mountain, was more secure. Sinatra became furious because he had spent a great deal of money on the new buildings only to have Kennedy stay with Bing, who was a Republican to boot. He could most likely see that the supposed security concerns were mere excuses, and that his relationship with Giancana was the real reason why the president was refusing to stay with him. After dismissing Lawford from his house, Sinatra severed all ties to both Lawford and the Kennedys, which would create positive repercussions for the professional relationship between Frank and Bing. With Lawford out of the picture, Crosby would soon costar with the Rat Pack in "Robin and the Seven Hoods."

This "JFK affair" became a mere anecdote that did not affect Sinatra's rapport with Crosby, and the two kept collaborating through the years. Though Bing would not star in too many films in the '60s, his activities as a recording artist remained extremely interesting, and he released fine albums such as "Bing & Satchmo", "On the Happy Side", "On the Sentimental Side", and "A Little Bit of Irish", all of which are in need of rediscovery. Then in 1964 he would record with Sinatra on at least three occasions: the sessions for the *Robin and the Seven Hoods* soundtrack, the Christmas-themed "12 Songs of Christmas", and the patriotic "America I Hear You Singing", the latter two with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians.

At work with Frank and Dean for Reprise

The '60s were an important decade for Sinatra, who founded his own record label, Reprise, and cut some memorable albums with Count Basie and Duke Ellington, as well as peppering his LPs with the compositions of popular songwriters of the day such as António Carlos Jobim, Paul Anka, George Harrison, Paul Simon, Jacques Brel, and Rod McKuen. It was also the decade that saw all those wild parties in Las Vegas and even his attempts at film noir, such as when he was cast as detective Tony Rome. There must have been a certain kind of old black magic that allowed Sinatra to constantly reinvent himself until the end of his career.

Bing Crosby would pass away in Madrid, Spain, in 1977, aged 74. His legacy represents a crucial influence on the pop music of the 20th century and would be of paramount importance in shaping Sinatra's own style, particularly in his early years. The relationship between the two was always one of mutual respect and admiration, and the one never failed to praise the other's success. After Bing's passing came the issue of his posthumous album, "Seasons", a delightful LP that I always compare with Sinatra's "September of My Years". The back cover of the original release features several quotations from celebrities regarding Crosby. Sinatra's words are the perfect note on which to conclude this article: "He was the father of my career...the idol of my youth...a dear friend of my maturity. He leaves a gaping hole in our music and in the lives of everybody who ever loved him. And that's just about everybody."

Marcos Callau

The Harasen Line

Veteran broadcaster Lorne Harasen from Regina, Saskatchewan interviewed Bing on many occasions and he has been re-listening to the tapes of those interviews. He now shares some memories of the meetings.

Bing Crosby was keenly interested in sports both as a participant and observer. As a college boy at Gonzaga in Spokane he played baseball which took him to games as far north as Medicine Hat Alberta and later becoming a Vice President of the Major League Baseball Pittsburgh Pirates where he got to feel what it's like to be a World Series Champion.

He was a scratch golfer as was his son Nathaniel. Bing played in both the US and British Amateur events. For many years Bing sponsored the Crosby Pro-Am golf tournament at Pebble Beach California. During his lifetime he scored 13 holes-in-one and of course he collapsed and died on a golf course right after playing the 18th hole. Probably a golfer's ultimate dream.

He owned race horses, invested in a race track and eventually purchased a mansion at Hillsborough near San Francisco which was first owned by Charles S. Howard who also owned Seabiscuit an undersized multi champion race horse who apparently didn't know he was too small to be racing.

Bing was a top notch marksman who hunted almost two days a week everywhere from African safari to upland game birds south of Swift Current Saskatchewan. As an outdoor sportsman he also knew his way around fishing tackle and where "the big ones" lurked.

It follows that Bing also passed on his sporting interests to his children. Nathaniel as a young boy was a fan of the Minnesota Vikings of the National Football League. He wrote to all the players and collected their pictures.

The Vikings were training at Stanford University and of course Nathaniel wanted his Dad to take him there. I will let Bing tell the story: "***of course I had to take him down there to the training grounds so he could meet all his friends and see them work out and they were running plays, the offence against the defence. We were standing on the sidelines. There were just a few people around, the trainers and assistant coaches and one or two newsmen. They were running plays and when they went into the defensive huddle, in full-throated choral arrangement, "White Christmas" came floating out of the huddle. It was very unexpected, very surprising. Then everybody laughed and they snapped the ball and away they went again."***

On another occasion Bing told me about the time that the Vikings who had come to know Nathaniel very well really honoured the young fan by inviting him to sit on the team bench during a game against the San Francisco 49ers. Bing said he sat on the opposite side of the field but watched his son with binoculars. Again Bing said: ***"of course he was sitting on the bench and running up and down with the assistant coaches. There came a long forward pass on the sidelines and one of the cornerbacks, a defensive player on the Vikings named Paul Krause trying to break up a pass ran right over Nathaniel, really flattened him.*** Bing said the boy was so proud of that. He said, "G***olly if I could have had a broken arm. Just think Paul Krause broke my arm. Wouldn't that be great Dad!"***

Paul Krause went on to play 16 years in the NFL and has held the record for most interceptions. 81 to be precise. As for Nathaniel he has gone on to make a name for himself in American amateur golf. He has also authored a book about golf and his world famous Dad.

Bing amazed me with his sporting knowledge. He was interested and aware of many sports even to the point of knowing player and team statistics. During one Christmas interview I was ending our chat but Bing had one more question about who won the Grey Cup which is Canada's Super Bowl. He also wanted to know who Quarterback Joe Theismann played for. He noted, "I thought Theismann would go great up there with his style of play. You know he can scramble and run and throw." Bing added "I love Canadian football. I think it's a very exciting game."

Yet another example that the great man had widely held interests from reading the classics to music, acting, business and keeping track of sports and passing that interest on to his children.

Lorne Harasen

(Editor: Those of you who attended the 2003 Gonzaga Celebration will remember Lorne chairing a panel of celebrities talking about Bing. At one point Kathryn Crosby spoke in Russian and Lorne immediately conversed with her in the same language much to our surprise. Lorne has recently written a book about his long career titled, The Harasen Line, A Broadcaster's Memoir published by FriesenPress, Suite 300 – 990 Fort St., Victoria British Columbia, V8V 3K2 Canada (www.friesenpress.com, e-book $4.99, paperback $18.99. Hardcover $29.99). To order it, either go to the publisher direct or order from Lorne at 86 Marquis Crescent, Regina Sk. S4S 6J9 Canada.

We shall have another instalment from Lorne in our next issue.)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 715-2018 Robertson Rd., Nepean, Ottawa, ON, K2H 1C6, Canada.

Gord's latest book "The Golden Years of Entertainment" is available to Crosby collectors for $20.00 US or Canadian funds or equivalent in British pounds. Write to Gord direct.

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby – Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication, this 67-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate Take discovered since that first edition. In total, 131 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above.

ALSO

Top prices paid for the following 45rpm discs in excellent condition:

7" UK Brunswick 45-05244, 45-05269, 45-05277, 45-05304, 45-05339, 45-05501, 45-05620 and 45-05840. Also: UK STEREO EPs "Bing and Satchmo" (MGM ES 3515), "Join Bing and Sing Along" Vol. 1 (Warner Brothers WSEP 2050), Vol. 2 (WSE 6100) and Vol. 3 (WSE 6103).

Please write to John if you can help.

Gale Harvey, 29 Newton Way, Tongham, Surrey GU10 1BY, UK.

Our long standing member Gwen Harvey died in March at the age of 94 and her daughter faces the daunting task of disposing of her huge Crosby collection. There are 200 78s, 500 LPs, 500 CDs, 150 DVDs, posters, photos, books, various memorabilia and a vast number of scrapbooks.

Those interested should contact Gwen's daughter Gale on either 01252 316648 or 07836 528782. The scrapbooks are in Surrey and would have to be collected. Gale would like to pass the scrapbooks on to Crosby fans without charge.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued by the Society and they can now be received in PDF form by email if desired. The regular film nights continue and in April *College Humor* was shown together with part one of the *Hollywood Singing and Dancing* documentary series. *College Humor* was not well received however as Peter de Ryk wrote in the newsletter:-

Bing sings to Mary Carlisle in *College Humor.*

"It seems that some people felt that the corny story just got in the way of the music and comedy far too much, which is probably an indicator of how much more sophistication we demand from our entertainment these days. Those members who were around when the Club first screened this back in 1981 will remember the thrill akin to opening a time capsule. Even though we had nothing better than a very poor celluloid copy with irritating sound quality, we saw it as a fascinating document of a lost era. The centrepiece – Bing's rendition of *Learn to Croon* – is still undoubtedly worth watching, as his voice was in peak condition. The fact that Mary Carlisle was in the cast, and that she is still alive today as one of the few remaining stars of "Old Hollywood", was also a big plus. But there seems to have been a feeling among our current members that we could have skipped straight to *Learn to Croon* and omitted most of the rest of the picture."

"It came as something of a surprise to many of our attending members in April that Bing's co-star in *College Humor* – Mary Carlisle - is still alive aged 104, and living in a retirement home. It was suggested on the night that any member who had a Facebook account might like to send Mary a message on behalf of the ABCS. Christina Warren took up the suggestion, and sent the following message to Mary Carlisle:"

Dear Mary, Greetings from the Australian Bing Crosby Society in Melbourne, who gathered last week to enjoy "College Humor" from 1933. Your character, Barbara the co-ed, was a total minx! First you drove the college's star football player to drink, leading to his expulsion. And as a result Bing – your drama professor – got in a fight with the dean and lost his job! In the depths of the Depression! However, you reformed (sort of) and everybody still loved you by the end of the picture. Memorable line (after cornering Bing in his study): "I always feel more intimate with my shoes off". Apparently you were Bing's most frequent co-star in the 30s, so we hope to see you again at future film nights.

The June film was *Star Spangled Rhythm*. Further film nights are scheduled for 21 August, 16 October and 11 December (all Tuesdays). The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material all of which is being updated as new information arises. The site has been visited 942 times in the last four months. Since the site was redesigned some years ago by Howard Crossland, it has been visited no less than 42,971 times. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker.

Other sites well worth a visit are:

www.BingCrosby.com - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby on Facebook - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby House (on Facebook)
Bing Crosby on Twitter - @Bingconstantly and @Bing_Crosby are the links..
Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"The Old Groaner"—The Bing Crosby Fan Page – a Facebook group.
Jack Boyle's "Bing for the Seasons – a Facebook group.
The Early Bing Crosby 1926-1936 a Facebook group administered by Mike Pearl
Jon Oye's Blog – run by ICC stalwart Jon Oye. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/
The Bing Crosby News Archive - David Lobosco runs this blog at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum - See http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/) - A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o Sandra K. Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (website: www.jolson.org - also on Facebook). A different Jolson radio show can be heard via the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England. (www.memorylane.org.uk)
The acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music**.** A "*must*" for 78 RPM collectors. Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £16 - UK, £22 - overseas.)
Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/). This was founded in 1955. A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the Dublin Branch of the Sinatra Music Society has now closed.

Books 'n' Bing

1. People I've Known and Been – "Little by Little"

by Rich Little, first published by Dog Ear Publishing in 2015, 244 pages, ISBN:978-1-4575-5820-7. Hardcover $39.95, paperback $24.95, Kindle $10.59

Our honorary member Rich Little describes his book as not really being a biography, but more of a humorous glimpse of the people he's impersonated and some of the funny stories that happened along the way. It's certainly a very readable look at some 27 people ranging from Presidents to James Stewart, John Wayne, George Burns, Cary Grant, Jack Benny, Frank Sinatra, Bing and many more. Rich does not fawn over his subjects and instead he appraises them in a balanced way adding many amusing titbits and I really enjoyed this book.

The chapter on Der Bingle headed "The Caring Crooner" includes the following.

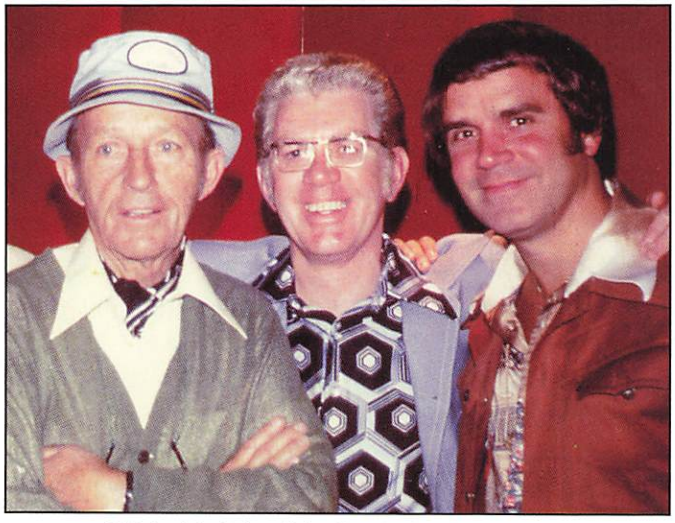
Who was the greatest entertainer of all time?

Bing Crosby.

Not because I knew him, not because I liked him, not because I thought he was a great actor or a great singer, but because the facts say so.... Bing Crosby was a very special person in my life, and not at all the kind of person you'd imagine. He was very laid-back, nowhere near as exciting as, say, Frank Sinatra, but a real pro and a very bright man. From a very young age, he knew exactly where he was going and that nothing could stop him. He was one of the very few entertainers I've met in my life who was more concerned about how you would come off rather than how he would come off.

Bing was a very shy, humble man - at least that's what he wanted you to think. But he tended to exaggerate his humility. He couldn't handle compliments too well. All his life, he heard people say how great he was, so I guess after a while he started to downplay his importance because it threw people off. Of course, he knew he was the best. All he had to do was take a look at his trophy room!

Bing also came across as not being very affectionate – no touching, kissing or hugging. I once hugged him on The Merv Griffin Show and he seemed very uncomfortable. (Actually, I was just trying to find his wallet!) Because of his lack of outward affection, people thought he was cold and aloof. Not true! He had a very kind heart. But if you were a phony or if you gushed all over him, he'd turn you off in a hurry...



Rich (right) with Gord Atkinson and Bing in 1976.

The next time I met Bing was in January, 1976. Bing was recording four songs with a live, 40-piece orchestra at the United Western Studios on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, California. My Canadian friend, Gord Atkinson, and I were invited to watch Bing record, and stay for lunch. This was the first time I met Ken Barnes, who was producing the album, and who became a life-long friend. There are several things I remember about that session. After Bing sang a song called "Children," he came back into the control room to listen to the playback, but he kept his back to us. I noticed that he took out his handkerchief and started to dab his eyes, pretending to blow his nose. Everyone was happy with the playback except Ken Barnes. He asked Bing if he would do another take, but Bing said, "No, that one was fine." He was stubborn like that. It was, indeed, technically fine. The orchestra was perfect, and Bing sang the song beautifully. But Ken felt that he should have held the last note a fraction longer. So Ken suggested that they redo just the last four bars, which they could then edit into the end of the song. Bing shook his head. "No, let's get on with the next number. He turned and headed back to the studio, and we saw tears in his eyes. It was then that it dawned on me that perhaps the lyrics reminded him of the trouble he'd had with his four sons from his first marriage...

I consider myself privileged to have known Bing Crosby. He was not only a peerless entertainer, but also a fine and caring man.

2. The Man Who Would Be Bing – The Life Story of Michael Holliday

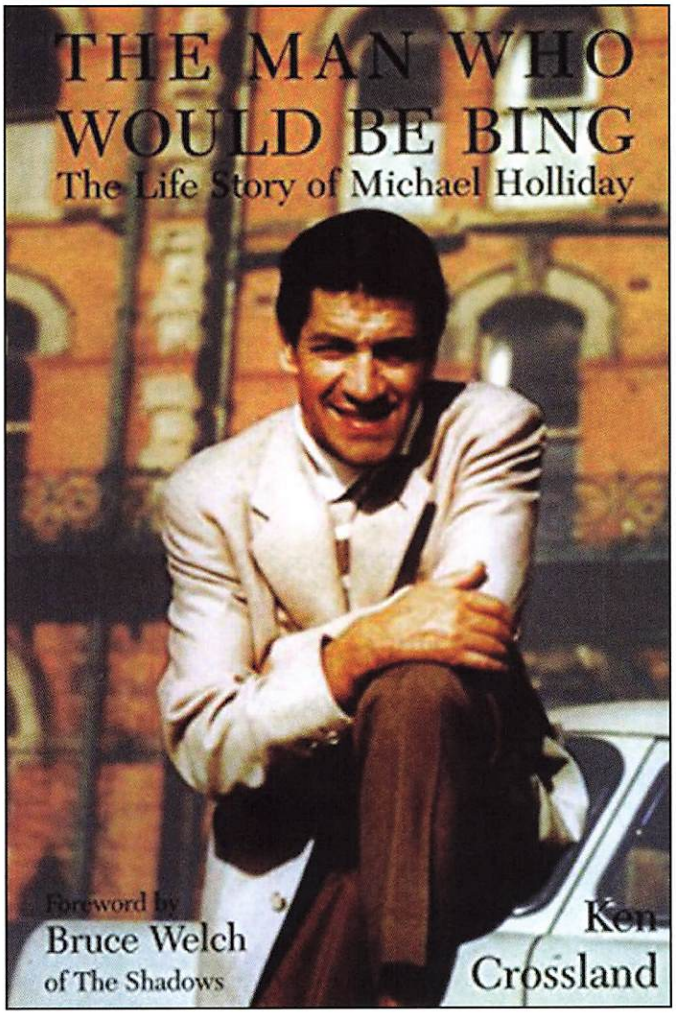
by Ken Crossland, available from Amazon Kindle, file Size: 8091 KB, print length: 443 pages. £4.99.

Ken's excellent biography of Michael Holliday was originally published in 2004 by The Book Guild and it soon sold out completely. To meet continuing requests for the book, Ken has arranged for it to be published by Amazon as a Kindle edition.

Most of you will know that Michael Holliday was a very popular UK singer of the late 1950s and early 60's who enjoyed several top 10 hits including the song most closely associated with him – "The Story of My Life". A likeable Liverpool lad, he was a rabid fan of Bing and often could sound uncannily like him. However fame brought pressures with which Holliday was ill-equipped to cope and he died at the age of 38 from a drug overdose which was felt at the time to have been suicide. This remarkably well-researched book by Ken tells Holliday's story in a concise and riveting manner and you won't want to put your Kindle down until you finish it. The man who was Michael Holliday is brought to life as his activities are traced through his peak years and then through the difficult times when he fought a losing battle with the trappings that fame brought.

He was a man of many contrasts. Ambitious for fame and adoration, yet uneasy amongst his audience. Forever chasing girls, but devastated by the split in the early 60s from the wife he loved. Holliday was driven to despair by the tangle of tax problems resulting from his high-earning period. However, perhaps fairly to his subject, Ken does not attempt any psychoanalysis to

pinpoint any single factor that brought Michael Holliday down, but suggests that the sum of the various parts caused the nervous breakdown and eventual death. As also befits a fan of the singer, Ken, in the book's coda, throws up a number of questions to cast some doubt on the previously accepted view that Holliday took his own life.



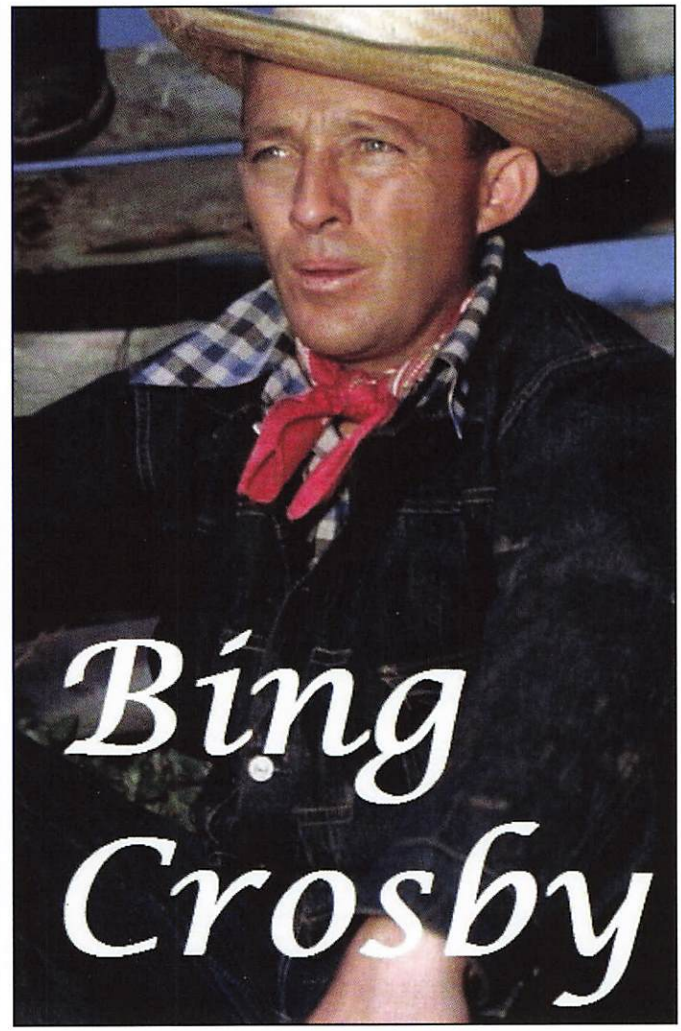
Of course, Bing's shadow is bound to loom large over any study of Michael Holliday's work. Ken Crossland skilfully points up the obvious vocal similarities and the relaxed image, both had professionalism, but contrasts the "real" lives of the two. Crosby was "a man totally in control of his life" who would not be told where to go or who to see. For Crosby, this of course was a product of the 30 years stardom he had enjoyed by the time the two met. Holliday, with his managers, agents and record company executives and, moreover, his fragile personality, was not quite so fortunate.

Anyone with an interest in popular music of the 50s and 60s will enjoy Ken's outstanding book.

3. Bing Crosby: The Billion Selling Artist!

Frank Startup drew my attention to a number of small books about Bing on Amazon (UK) by someone called Steven King. They are:
(a) Bing Crosby: The Billion Selling Artist!
(b) Bing Crosby & Dean Martin!: The King of Cool & The Billion Selling Man!
(c) Bing Crosby & Frank Sinatra: Ol' Blue Eyes & The Billion Selling Man!
(d) Bing Crosby & Elvis Presley!: The Billion Selling Artist & The King!

All paperbacks selling for £5.99 each.



I ordered the one titled "Bing Crosby: The Billion Selling Artist!" to have a closer look. It has a nice coloured cover and it has 76 A5 size pages. There are 19 pages of biography (nice to read so many sentences from Wikipedia and my Day by Day book!) and 12 pages of black and white photos. The remainder comprises 45 pages of appendices of chart hits, films, TV appearances etc. Everything in the book is very accurate and it seems that the extensive information on the BING magazine web site and on Wikipedia has been intensively used. (A Wikipedia citation number is included in error!). It's also very up-to-date as information I put on Wikipedia not long ago is included. The print is small.

The author's name is not actually given on the book but I am guessing that "Steven King" is probably an ICC member as the text reveals some long term knowledge. It reminds me of the Bing Crosby Information File the ICC put out many years ago. There is an ISBN number however which is 9-781986-542586.

4. Crossover Stardom - Popular Male Music Stars in American Cinema, by Julie Lobalzo Wright, published December 28, 2017 by Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 9781628925784, $86.40

Lachlan McLean told me about this publication which is a PDF eBook (Watermarked) with 216 pages and 30 black and white illustrations. Here's what the publicity says.

"Julie Lobalzo Wright is a Teaching Fellow in Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick in the UK. She has published several articles and book chapters on film stardom and popular music and film. She is the co-editor, along with Lucy Bolton, of the BAFTSS winning Best Edited Collection, *Lasting Screen Stars: Images that Fade and Personas that Endure* (2016).

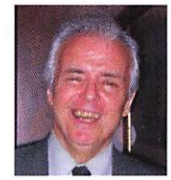
Crossover Stardom: Popular Male Stars in American Cinema focuses on male music stars who have attempted to achieve film stardom. Crossover stardom can describe stars who cross from one medium to another. Although 'crossover' has become a popular term to describe many modern stars who appear in various mediums, crossover stardom has a long history, going back to the beginning of the cinema. Lobalzo Wright begins with Bing Crosby, a significant Hollywood star in the studio era; moving to Elvis Presley in the 1950s and 1960s, as the studio system collapsed; to Kris Kristofferson in the New Hollywood period of the 1970s; and ending with Will Smith and Justin Timberlake, in the contemporary era, when corporate conglomerates dominate Hollywood. Thus, the study not only explores music stardom (and music genres) in various eras, and masculinity within these periods, it also surveys the history of American cinema from industrial and cultural perspectives, from the 1930s to today."

Table of contents

List of Illustrations
Acknowledgements
Introduction
1: The Crooner Film Star: Bing Crosby
2: The Rock 'N' Roll Film Star: Elvis Presley
3: The Country Film Star: Kris Kristofferson
4: The Rap Film Star: Will Smith
5: The Pop Film Star: Justin Timberlake
Conclusion
Bibliography
Filmography

Your editor has not read this but it seems to be very expensive for a book in a PDF format.

This Road Leads to Carnegie Hall



Martin McQuade reports.

On December 10, 1976, Bing Crosby, with his wife Kathryn and daughter Mary, sat alongside the vastly influential cabaret singer Mabel Mercer on a local New York TV show, *Midday*, hosted by Bill Boggs. During the discussion, Mercer shared her deceptively simple approach to her art. "You sing what the song is about. I find that most of the songs we sing touch everybody's life. Everybody has had those experiences: love, sadness, laughter. The way I react, everybody else must react in a like manner in a varying degree, because we all feel the same emotions."

Bing enthusiastically concurred. "I couldn't agree more. That's exactly the way I feel. Exactly." Kathryn chimed, "The meaning of the word is what a great singer puts across."

Mary added the capstone. "My teacher told me, 'Above all, you have to go and see Mabel Mercer. Not only does she have one of the most beautiful voices in the world. She's got to be one of the best actresses around.'"

On May 18, 2018 at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, not very far from where that colloquy occurred, The Mabel Mercer Foundation presented *All the Way: The Music of Jimmy Van Heusen,* a program that exemplified Mercer's credo. The bill of fare also successfully achieved the organization's mission "to perpetuate the memory and spirit of its legendary namesake and to promote public interest in classic popular song and the art of cabaret." The Foundation's artistic director, esteemed singer KT Sullivan, hosted the gala affair. Many of New York's best nightclub entertainers relied upon musical director Jon Weber to delineate a large share of tunes by Bing's - and Frank Sinatra's - perennial go-to composer. For purposes of this publication, here is a list of the night's tunes that Bing sang during his career. "Oh, You Crazy Moon," received a tender and wistful reading by Joie Bianco. Shana Farr summoned twenties mirth with "Thoroughly Modern Millie." Greg Gropper captured the hesitant romance of "Moonlight Becomes You," which he prefaced with the rarely heard verse. Marissa Mulder displayed versatility as she sultrily emphasized the double-entendres of "Personality," while imbuing "Sunday, Monday or Always" with a tender yearning. She defied the audience to recognize what song might follow her rendering of the obscure and preposterous verse of "Imagination," completely stumping this attendee. Evan Stern subtly evoked the colloquial sheen of Johnny Burke's lyrics for "Humpty Dumpty Heart," and Amy Beth Williams' sensitive merger of "The Second Time Around" and "Like Someone in Love" made perfect sense. Show-stopping Jeff Harnar

heroically delivered what seemed like a personal manifesto with the night's grand finale, "All the Way," inducing a sing-a-long.

Singer/pianist Eric Comstock adroitly switched the emotional gears of the ultimate train tune, "I Thought About You." He then accompanied his partner-in-song Barbara Fasano for her multi-shaded "But Beautiful." Then they blended for a sage combination of "Incurably Romantic" and "It Could Happen to You." These are quintessential samples of Van Heusen's brilliance, whether in teamwork with Cahn or Burke. This electrifying duo brought out the seduction in both, and never have arms sounded more alluring.

Eric Comstock and Barbara Fasano sing Jimmy Van Heusen together.

Barbara expressed via e-mail her passion and dedication, which certainly reflects that of all of the performers who enticed an enchanted audience. She also cited her high regard for Bing.

My love of Bing Crosby begins with my father, a huge jazz fan, whose favorite singer was Bing (not Sinatra — what a shock for an Italian American!). I think my Dad loved Crosby's easy-going manner and his effortless swing. And of course, Crosby had the best Hollywood songwriters — Burke and Van Heusen, of course, but also Mercer, Warren and later Porter and Cahn. As a singer, there's nothing like sinking your chops into the beautiful melodies of a Van Heusen song with dreamy lyrics by Johnny Burke. I recently recorded "But Beautiful" on my latest CD, "Busy Being Free," and I never tire of singing that gorgeous, perfect song. It's quite a deep, philosophical lyric, but true to Crosby's nature, it never gets too heavy or pretentious. "Incurably Romantic" is another favorite of mine — Sammy Cahn's lyric seems an homage to Johnny Burke's style — and I love the scene in the film 'Let's Make Love" where an uncredited Crosby coaches Yves Montand in wooing Marilyn Monroe with the song. The music really soars and the lyric has such wonderful imagery and delicious verbiage — you don't get to sing "susceptible" or "set-up" in a love song too often! These are terrific, timeless songs, and I'm so proud to be part of a profession that honors the legacy of the Great American Songbook.

Barbara's CD is available at barbarafasano.com

Upon leaving the hall, this reporter had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of filmmaker Jim Burns, responsible for the 2015 PBS documentary, *Jimmy Van Heusen: Swinging with Frank and Bing,* a thorough and balanced review of the composer's association with both legends. In a subsequent correspondence Jim stated, "We were happy to highlight Crosby in our PBS documentary. If it were possible, I would have included even more from *Road to Morocco*. "Ho Hum" is a favorite of mine." As with the concert, it would take a marathon to survey the amazingly prolific output of Syracuse, New York's cherished native hipster, nee Chester Babcock. "What's in a name," indeed!

The Mabel Mercer Foundation holds its 29th annual Cabaret Convention from Oct. 9-12, 2018 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall. *The Night and the Music: Celebrating Rosemary Clooney, Barbara Cook and Julie Wilson,* under the musical supervision of Clooney's longtime arranger John Oddo, takes place Oct. 10. Debby Boone will be a special guest. For further details visit www.mabelmercer.org

---

Book Note:

Ali: A Life by Jonathan Eig (Houghton Mifflin; 2017) cites an encounter at The Olympic Village in Rome during the 1960 Olympics. "Ali met the singer and actor Bing Crosby, striding with him arm in arm, and then found himself posing for pictures with Floyd Patterson, boxing's heavyweight champion and an Olympic gold medalist from 1952." At the Ali-Frazier fight on March 8, 1971 at Madison Square Garden, "Bing Crosby settled for a seat at the sold-out Radio City Music Hall, where he would watch via closed circuit." In attendance at MSG with whom Bing did not hobnob that night were Sinatra, Streisand, Diana Ross, Apollo 14 Astronauts, Hubert Humphrey, Woody Allen, Diana Ross, Burt Bacharach, William Saroyan, Ted Kennedy, Col. Sanders, Marcello Mastroianni, and NY Mayor Lindsay. Incidentally, Bing and Bob Hope headlined the Garden's opening night 3 years prior.

David Bowie Is...And Always

David Bowie Is, an exhibition that emanated from The Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2013, reached the final leg of its world tour at The Brooklyn Museum. The museum press office kindly facilitated my recent visit to this spectacularly mounted review of the prolific artist. Artifacts from his humble London origins are on display. One such item is a key ring, circa 1955-60, from which hang cameo photos of Elvis, Guy Mitchell, Tommy Steele, Frankie Vaughan and David Whitfield. A telefax sent by Elvis from Madison Square Garden dated June 8, 1972 wishing Bowie good luck on his *Station-to-Station* tour demonstrates that Bowie developed a friendship with his teenage idol. His love for Broadway standards becomes clear by way of a poster display of his favorite musicals, such as *Oliver* and *Cabaret.* An adjoining plaque states that he sang "Chim Chim Cheree" in 1967 for his first BBC audition. A press release issued by London Decca for Bowie's eponymous 1967 debut album mentions his debt to Glenn Miller and Stan Kenton, and references a congratulatory phone call from Mel Torme.

All of these signposts place in context Bowie's affinity for mainstream pop music, and especially his fabled duet with Bing, initially heard on his last Yuletide TV special. Walls adorning a room devoted to the theme, "David Bowie Is Surprising Himself," highlight many 45-RPM recordings in their original picture sleeves. Among these is the 1982 posthumously issued RCA Victor single of Bing and Bowie's milestone duet, "Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth." The cover pictures the two artists side by side as seen on the broadcast, and includes the text, "Originally performed in the 1977 special, *Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas*, produced by The Konigsberg Company." Two contemporary Bowie 45-rpm records, "Beauty and the Beast" and "Sound and Vision" flank this perennial favorite. A poster for Bowie's 1976 film, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, rounds out his connection to Bing, inasmuch as this movie includes on its soundtrack another Crosby duet, "True Love" with Grace Kelly.

Elsewhere, a document with Bowie's hand-written lyrics for "Heroes," with the description "an international anthem evoking solidarity and defiance," represents the flip side of Bing's last multi-million selling Christmas hit. This trans-generational collaboration will help to ensure that David Bowie will always remain "Is." The stunning exhibition ended on July 15.

Martin McQuade

Bing on Parkinson

Members will know that Bing appeared on the BBC's *Parkinson* show twice in the 1970s. Jason Liddiard drew my attention to a book titled "Parkinson" published in 1975 in which Michael Parkinson quotes from the words spoken by his guests on the show. Some of the text of Bing's 1972 appearance is given and we have great pleasure in reproducing it here.

I lived in a little town called Spokane. There was this syndicated strip called the 'Bingville Bugle' and one of the characters in the strip was a guy named Bingo. I was about six years old and I thought I looked like Bingo and they started calling me Bingo, and then they dropped the '0', and from then on nobody called me Harry except my mother. My mother and father were both musical. Father played the guitar, mother played the piano, they both appeared in the local theatricals, the Gilbert and Sullivan things, you know, and we always had a piano in the house. My sisters played the piano, both of them, and we had the first phonograph in our neighbourhood. There was music in the house at all times. Well, I sang around the house a lot and mother took me down one day to the vocal teacher—Professor Kranz was his name—and he gave me some scales to run up and down and he taught me a few songs. It was a rough town and if anybody took up singing they had to be very much of a cissy. But I learned something from him, I learned how to vocalise and train. Then I sang at the little parish and school entertainments and whenever they wanted somebody, you know, I'd get up and sing a song, and I was about twelve years old.

As I said, we always had a phonograph in the house, a Victor Talking Machine it was called in those days. I liked John McCormack, he had a beautiful lyrical type voice and he sang with great sentiment. He sang some beautiful songs, you know, like 'The Rose of Tralee' and so many of the good Irish songs and the English songs. He was always on and I suppose I picked up some of his style—I hope I did, because he's a great artist—and

then, later on, Al Jolson. He was a great singer, a great performer. In fact, when I was sixteen or seventeen, I used to go down and work in the local theatre whenever any of the great touring shows came through town, like Jolson, or The Follies. Whenever Jolson was in town, he played there three or four times. I always managed to get a job and watch him and I'm sure I picked up a lot of hints from not only his singing, but from his stage deportment. It was electric. When he came on the stage he just generated electricity, which I've never seen duplicated since, except perhaps by Frank Sinatra when he gives a concert. No one else, I don't think, ever achieved that. It was the way he moved, his body, his movement, without doing anything sinuous or suggestive, but he was charged up himself and he communicated that enthusiasm and that electricity to the audience, and they were just on the edge of their seats until he was finished.

I remember the first time he was on a show with me, it had been a number of years since he'd been a big star, he'd never really done anything else since his successful years and the audience was mostly young people. He didn't relate to it very much except from the movie and I was kind of concerned how he would go. He hadn't sung two bars of 'Toot Toot Tootsie' or whatever it was, you know, before he had them all on their feet, cheering all the way through the show. And from that night, of course, he was a tremendous success every time we had him on.

All the singers in every band were supposed to be instrumentalists, part of the band. Later, of course, The Rhythm Boys, we were sort of extroverts; if we held an instrument in the band we had to play something, make a noise on it, whether it fitted in with the arrangement or not. They tried me on French horn and saxophone and I couldn't resist. You know, when they were playing some heavy arrangement, sometimes I would oommpah in one chord and sometimes I'd oommpah in another chord. They finally gave me a violin with rubber strings. I could just strike away on that, I was happy with that. Of course, anything that I wanted to do that was comical or funny or out of line, Joe Venuti encouraged. One time I remember, Whiteman was playing the 1812 Overture and, at the end of the Overture, if you remember, they're burning Moscow and the bells are ringing wildly all over, and he had about six sets of these bells hanging up along. Well, there were the Rhythm Boys and Skin Young, another vocalist, and when this climax comes, it goes for a couple of minutes, the orchestra's blaring away and the bells are ringing wildly and Moscow's burning and we're supposed to beat on these bells. Well, we beat the hell out of those bells. We beat them so well we finally broke about six or seven sets of bells and the stage manager finally came to Whiteman and said, 'How far do you want these guys to go? They're running us out of bells here.'

Bing rehearsing for the Parkinson Show.

When I started in movies I remember one time they said my ears stuck out too far—I looked like a taxi with both doors open—and so they got the make-up man to glue them back. Then I looked like a whippet in full flight. And the glue used to itch back there, you know, and of course in those days they used a lot more light when they were lighting a set than they do now, and it was very hot on this set. That made the glue come loose and my ears would pop up; then it would be back to the make-up department, big glue job again. One day they popped out and I said, 'They've got to stay out.' At that time I'd made a few pictures that were moderately successful, so they let it go on that way.

I never had my tonsils out. They never bothered me, but I did have an episode when I was in New York doing the New York Paramount and I was doubling over in the Brooklyn Paramount. I was doing eight shows a day and commuting on the subway and I just got so that I couldn't utter a sound. My voice just conked out on me and I went to see a celebrated throat man in Philadelphia. He took a look down there and said the vocal cords, you know, are like a muscle—when you produce a sound they rub together. And from over-use I'd developed warts, which they called nodes. And he said, 'I could operate, but it's a very delicate operation, and if I should slip, you'd sound like a boy soprano.' He said, 'You should rest for about a month and don't even talk. Give your order to Room Service with a note and don't answer the telephone.' So I did that and I didn't have any more trouble.

Sinatra is a great singer. He creates a mood which very few people are able to do. I don't think I create a mood when I sing. Nat Cole could do that and Sinatra does it in a memorable way. When he walks on with the top coat over his shoulders and a hat, and he goes into 'Black Magic' or one of those kind of songs, he's created

a mood right away. The audience is with him. And very few people can do that, that I know of.

There are some great singers around today. I thought ten or twelve years ago when this new vogue first started, the musicianship wasn't good, you know, the harmonies weren't good, or at least inadequate. They played very simple chords and sometimes the singers were out of tune. That's all changed now, they're marvellously exciting, marvellously expert. Some of the arrangements some of these groups sing are fantastic and some of the things these groups play are absolutely amazing. They're brilliant, thrilling.

Well the easy answer, my favourite is 'White Christmas', because it did so much for me and I'm eternally grateful to Irving Berlin for writing it and making it a song in a picture. Now the song is identified with me, it's used every Christmas and I do a Christmas show and there's no way to avoid singing it. That's the song that really had the most influence on anything I ever accomplished.

I imagine if people like me it's because they figure I am just one of the fellows. I don't have any side or any great flair or anything, I just sing simply, and most people think they could sing as well themselves if they tried, and they like me for that reason. Ever since I've started, I've been lucky in having good advisers, both recording and in pictures, radio and television, and I've listened to them. I've selected, or gone under, the agency of people who have had success, who were qualified, and I've just put myself in their hands and I've done as I was told.

Bing Crosby

The show was taped on September 18, 1972 at the BBC's Shepherds Bush studios in London and broadcast on December 23 that year. Bing was paid a fee of £500 and he took £170 of this in cash. Ralph Harding, editor of *The Crosby Collector* (published by the International Society of Crosby Collectors – the I.S.C.C) was there and saw the rehearsal too. He wrote about the experience in the Christmas 1972 edition of his magazine.

The Michael Parkinson Show with Bing Crosby

How can anyone describe in mere words the effect of Bing Crosby strolling on the television set, giving that saucy little skip, the casual wave and the bland smile? It would take a Hemingway or a Maugham to put into words the ovation that Bing received after his rendering of "White Christmas", seated on a high stool, gently swaying with a trailer-mike held in his hand, his foot ever so slightly weaving to the melody. After his rendition of the song that has sold countless millions, the audience rose as one man, a standing ovation, the applause, the shouts for more, deafening. On my feet, myself, I glanced around and saw a capacity audience yelling for more, wildly applauding for just one more song. An audience made up of mainly oldsters, many of them there in their sixties and seventies. Before the show I spoke briefly to one old lady of ninety and as I glanced around I saw that same old lady clapping and cheering with the rest, her eyes aglow, and at that moment forty years had fallen away, leaving her with her younger memories.

But let me start from the very beginning and describe some of the events preceding the actual telecast, before the audience were allowed to enter on the stroke 4 p.m. I had arrived early in the car with my wife, Diana, and my two friends and associates, Sid and Jose Dorrington. I was not the first by a long way - Alf Farrow, Frank Briggs, Vic Gilmore and other northern readers were well encamped, along with other long-distance travellers as Reg Bristo, Frank Hatwell, Fred Reynolds, and local members Tony Carpenter, Brenda Miles et al. Later on, the small former vaudeville theatre (where I once saw the great "Fats" Waller, Louis Armstrong and Django Reinhardt with the Quintette du Hot Club de France) was filled with over 115 members of the I.S.C.C. and glancing around, it was a great pleasure for me to see (and meet) readers who have supported throughout the years and yet we had never before met - such good people as Maurice Beardmore, and others whom I had not seen for many years, such as Kit Manners (wife of my old pal Jack Manners) and so many others. But back to the story…

I had been asked by the assistant producer to go into the theatre before the opening and as I had several tickets to pass out to last-minute members or their wives and friends, I handed these over to Reg Bristo, who kindly volunteered to pass them out to the appropriate members, in my absence temporarily.

On reaching the sound stage with my wife and friends, the technicians were going about their normal business of setting up cameras, adjusting lights and the other technicalities. I passed the time of day with a couple of cameramen, one assistant whom I had met before, and was greeted by producer, Richard Drewett and Tony James. My wife made friends with Jenny, a girl-Friday and secretary to the production teams and I wandered around, interested in all and sundry that was going on behind the scenes. Then, at that moment, Bing wandered on to the set and went through a few lines with Michael Parkinson, merely to test sound, positions and to work out a minor detail or two. After a few minutes, Bing decided to run through the song he was to sing, "White Christmas". It was a fascinating experience. Bing hummed a line or two, spoke the words, came in when he felt like it and then halfway through the song, he stopped and wandered over to the bandleader.

"You've changed the introduction," said Bing. "This is not the same introduction that you played before!"

Prior to Bing starting the song, the bandleader had doodled around with the intro - and Bing was right - the intro was different. It threw Bing and he started again. Bing went right through "White Christmas" softly as if he was singing the song to himself. As he finished, he put in his whistle and tapped his cheek rapidly to get that melodic vibrating effect. It worked and sounded delightful. There was a round of applause from the studio technicians who had stopped everything they were doing just to listen. I stood at the foot of the stage a few feet in front of Bing and watched his every move. Bing went back to the stool, hitched himself up with one leg dangling and went through "White Christmas" once again, same whistle, same cheek patting, same easy relaxed style.

No one was doing any work or seeing to their equipment. Hard-bitten technicians, normally blasé about the entertainers, were watching and listening to every word Bing uttered. At the end of the song, Bing got a great round of applause.

It was quite an experience to watch this legendary star work—except that it didn't seem like work. Bing wandered around for a while, exchanged a line or two with Michael merely for sound and camera testing and wandered off-stage, back to his dressing room.

At the appointed hour, 4.00p.m., the doors opened and an excited audience filled the theatre, both the stalls, and the circle. The greater part of the audience were members of the I.S.C.C. but unfortunately the tail end were placed in the circle. However, I understand that the circle occupants had a very good view, in many cases better, than the stalls who had a view sometimes, obscured by the TV cameras.

Tony James came on stage; the lights were set, and Tony gave a brief, introductory chat, explaining that mikes were positioned above the heads of the audience to pick up audience reaction, that if we felt a line of chat was funny we laughed, if we weren't sure if it was funny or not, we still laughed (and Tony would explain the gag later) and at specific moments we cheered and applauded like crazy. All this is fair and legitimate TV stage management and the audience is not coerced into producing false enthusiasm—but Tony James has a very charming line of patter and he was preaching to the converted anyway—so there was little doubt that Bing's every word would be enthusiastically received.

The stage manager started the count-down clock and three seconds before the programme started, the audience burst into applause. I am not familiar with-this time-synchronising technique, but it is akin to the clapper-board system for sound films. On the split second, Michael Parkinson strolled down the stage stairway to excited applause. Michael waited for the applause to die away and said, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My guest tonight is a legend in his own lifetime, one of the great legends of show business...and if I had the next cue I'd be able to carry on!" There was a moment's pause as his words sank in to the stage manager and then technicians rushed over to the "idiot board" (that roller screen in front of the camera that winds out various cues to the interviewer). Great consternation as the technicians tried to get things started.

Completely unruffled in this emergency, and wearing the broadest grin, Tony James came on stage and, informed the audience, "That is what is known in. the trade as"...Michael Parkinson interrupted..."as a B.B.C. cock-up!"

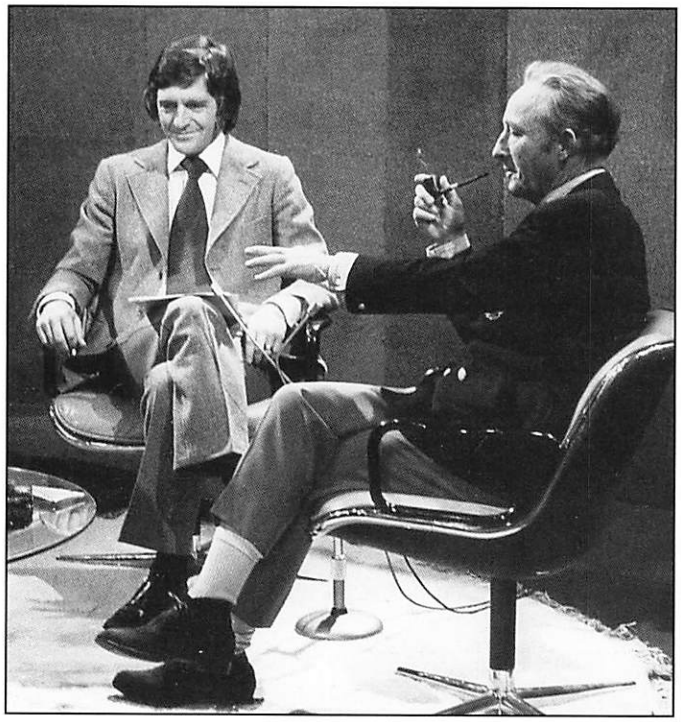
With mock seriousness, Tony James said ruefully "And he's just pinched my line!" The audience dissolved into mirth, the tension was over, but it was obvious that Michael Parkinson was not a little annoyed by the breakdown and the delay—quite understandable when one realises that it is not easy to retain one's cool if the programme gets under way badly.

Another start, perfect this time, and after Michael's introduction, Bing strolled casually on stage and took his seat. The applause was tumultuous and it was several seconds of sustained applause before the audience were signalled to quieten down so that the programme could get under way.

Michael took Bing easily through his early life, how he got his nick-name of Bing, his early days at college, as a drummer/vocalist with the Musicaladers, his pal Al Rinker, and Mildred Bailey, his days with Paul Whiteman and their association, his friendship with Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Lang, the Dorseys and Joe Venuti. There was a wonderful moment when Bing explained that Venuti was a "character" who virtually prematurely aged Whiteman with his ribs and gags. Bing quoted the occasion when Venuti chewed up Paul's violin just before he was. about to take a violin solo, and the occasion when, at the end of a medley of Victor Herbert songs in concert style, Joe Venuti got up and delivered the loudest raspberry (in perfect pitch) that Bing had ever heard. As Bing explained, Venuti was regarded with awe for the volume and pitch of his raspberry blowing. To illustrate, Bing got up on his feet and placing his hands, trumpet fashion, to his mouth, Bing blew the loudest raspberry (I believe our American friends call it a "Bronx cheer") that ever echoed its way through the BBC's illustrious walls.

Bing recalled that his father was quite musical and both his Dad and Mother had played in amateur theatricals and the like. Bing explained that his home was one of the very first to own a phonograph (playing cylinders) and that there was always lot of music in his home. Bing recalled the very first songs he sang and proceeded to sing "Alice Ben Bolt", "My Dog Rover" and then a rather saucy song (as Bing put it) called "Aphrodite in Her Nightie" which the early Rhythm Boys featured in their act. Bing, prompted by Michael Parkinson, covered a multitude of subjects and spoke about Carole Lombard and his friendly relationship with

William Randolph Hearst, the film *We're Not Dressing* and related the story of "Droopy" the bear who participated in that film—you will remember that this story was told me when I met Bing a few weeks previously and I published the story in this magazine.



Bing explains the difficulty of singing modern songs to Michael Parkinson.

Bing spoke about modern songs and the difficulty in singing them nowadays. In my days, he explained, songs were composed in the simple fashion of 8 bars, 4 bars, 8 bars or a similar even composition. But now, he said, songs were made up in quite a different fashion and far more difficult to sing. He praised modern composers of the standard of Bacharach and had the highest regard for modern performers, now that the standards had reached such a peak, although it was very obvious he had little regard for the earlier "shamateurs" and the three chord guitar pluckers. Bing related his regard for W.C. Fields, telling us what a great golfer Bill was and explained he was a great juggler, and went on to say some kind words about Sinatra, Bob Hope (although Hope was hardly mentioned in Bing's reminiscences) and other people he worked with or who influenced his career.

When asked by Parkinson why he had been so successful, Bing explained that he was always ready to listen to other people's advice, always ready to learn. And it would appear he learned a lot from his fellow artists and musicians.

During the course of the interview and at the appropriate moment in the script various shots from films were shown; the famous scene from *King of Jazz* in early Technicolor, "So The Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together" (featuring Bing with his two Rhythm Boys colleagues) and after it was shown I heard Bing say to Parkinson, sotto voce, "Just as well most of the scene was shot in silhouette!" This shot was followed by the scene from *Mississippi* when Bing sings, on stage, "Down by the River" and later a scene from *Road to Singapore* featured Bing with Dorothy Lamour and Bob Hope singing "Sweet Potato Piper," (Bing was heard to remark that a "sweet potato" was an ocarina) and various other film shots were shown including the Bing/Ingrid Bergman scene where the nuns and Bing sing "Bells of St. Mary's" (from the film of the same name) and the famous "Well, Did You Evah!" scene from *High Society* with Frank Sinatra. Parkinson explained that this was his all-time favourite scene from any film and commented on the sheer expertise and brilliance of its execution. Bing merely remarked that with such wonderful Cole Porter lyrics and direction and accompaniment, it was difficult not to make a successful scene for this great number.

And so it went on, a truly relaxed and completely professional Bing talking to a first-class interviewer who wisely let the "Old Master" do practically all of the talking. If ever Parkinson illustrated his personal charm and professionalism as the perfect interviewer, this was the occasion. Parkinson surpassed himself and I'm sure a lot of this was due to the ease and relaxed manner in which Bing answered and elaborated on the questions put to him.

The scheduled 55 minute programme ran on into over 90 minutes with Bing closing the programme with a relaxed "White Christmas", sitting on a stool. Despite the most deafening and rapturous applause from the audience, the producer and staff and the technical staff, applause that swelled and continued for several minutes with many of the audience on their feet yelling for more, Bing did not intend to sing another song. It was evident too, that not only did he intend to not sing but he was anxious to get off stage and back to his dressing room. And that's how it ended for well over a hundred dedicated Bing fans from the I.S.C.C....

Ralph Harding

Michael Parkinson had another memory of the occasion too.

> ...The only other person I know who travelled free by cab in London was Bing Crosby. We sent a limousine to pick him up at his hotel and bring him to the Television Centre. The driver rang up in a panic to say that Mr. Crosby had jumped into a cab. When the great man arrived I asked him why he had chosen a cab instead of a luxury car.
>
> "I like cabs," he said. I don't know why but I decided to pursue the matter.
>
> "What is it you like about them?" I said.
>
> "Well," he said, "the drivers know what they are doing, they are very friendly and I must

admit that in all the time I have been using them I have never had to pay a fare."

I said he had just defined the difference between being famous and a superstar. Then a doubt crept into my mind. There must have been the odd occasion when you got in the cab and the driver didn't know who you were?"

"Sure it happened, but when it did I took care of it," said Bing.

"How?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "if I thought the driver wasn't sure, I pushed back that little window dividing us and sang three bars of "White Christmas". After that, he knew who he had in the back of the cab."

(Michael Parkinson, writing in an article entitled 'People in My Life' for *Saga magazine*, March 1997.)

Celluloid Crosby

David Lobosco used unscheduled time at home to catch up on "Rhythm on the Range" again.

Some of Bing Crosby's movies from the 1930s are pretty forgettable. The plots are light and even the movie run times are short – some do not even surpass the 90 minute mark. We all know that the main draw of the films was Bing Crosby and his singing. It was singing that was new to popular music and new to movie musicals as a whole. Bing's 1936 film *Rhythm on the Range* may not be an epic cinematic adventure, but it was enjoyable, fun, and it featured some great Bing moments! I had not watched the film in years, but I was home sick with a cold and figured it would be a great chance to revisit the movie.

Based on a story by Mervin J. Houser, the film is about a cowboy who meets a beautiful young woman while returning from a rodeo in the east, and invites her to stay at his California ranch to experience his simple, honest way of life. *Rhythm on the Range* was Crosby's only western film (apart from the 1966 remake of *Stagecoach)*. Bing starred as Jeff Larabee, a simple man who would rather sleep under the stars than be burdened by city living. It was not really a stretch for Bing, because Bing loved the outdoors and western life and had ranches in Elko, Nevada in the 1940s. So basically, Bing played himself, or at least one facet of whom he was.

In addition to Bing Crosby, troubled actress Frances Farmer was cast as Bing's leading lady. Farmer played

Bing and Frances Farmer get to know each other.

Doris Halliday. She was the daughter of a big New York millionaire who left her fiancé at the altar, so she could try to live her life the way she wanted to. Things like that just did not happen in 1936! Frances Farmer was brought to Hollywood after having a successful Broadway career in the early 1930s. Frances soon found herself co-starring with Hollywood's biggest star Bing Crosby and then loaned out for the Howard Hawks film *Come And Get It* (also from 1936), where she was given the challenging dual roles of mother and daughter. Hawks called her "the greatest actress I have ever worked with". However, depression and alcoholism caused Farmer's star power to fade, and she spent most of her later years in and out of mental hospitals. You would not think that Bing and Frances Farmer would be compatible as star and co-star, but they were very good together. They made the romance seem believable, even though I found Farmer's acting to be somewhat wooden.

Rounding out the cast was comedian Bob Burns, who I have to say I never got. I did not think he was that funny or even interesting. Was he trying to replace Will Rogers as a "down home" comedian? I never was too sure. Bob Burns plays Bing's best friend and fellow rodeo employee. Making her debut in the film was the great Martha Raye. Raye plays a woman that Bob Burns' character meets on the train, and she instantly falls for him. Raye's character is pretty forgettable, but she is really bubbly and enjoyable in this debut role. Bing worked well with Martha Raye's comedy, and they would make a few movies together. (Martha Raye would also appear on Bing's 50th Anniversary Special on television in 1977.) There are also great cameos in the film like musician Louis Prima, future singing cowboy Roy Rogers, and the singing group The Sons of the Pioneers.

The movie ambles along, and basically it was the story about a poor man falling for a rich socialite. Bing's 1934 movie *We're Not Dressing* had a similar plot. One of *Rhythm on the Range's* most curious moments was the speech given by Lucile Gleason as Penelope 'Penny' Ryland, who owned the ranch that Bing worked for. As an amazing coincidence, she was also the aunt of Frances Farmer's character. The speech was about pioneer women and how women should have their own mind to make their own decisions. However, at the end of the movie when she thinks that her niece ran off with Bing, she chastises Bing for taking her niece away. I know that was 1936 and way before the #MeToo movement was even thought about, but as a viewer some 80 years later I find the whole scene annoying. It slowed down the film a bit and did not really further the plot. I have seen Ms. Gleason in other roles, but in my opinion her role and acting in this movie was the worst part of the film.

Lucile Gleason remonstrates with Bob Burns and Bing

As I wrote earlier, the music and the singing is the top draw of the film. Although for most musicals, only one songwriting team works on the film, in *Rhythm on the Range* numerous songwriters contributed to the movie. Three great songs that spotlighted Bing's soaring vocals were written for the film: "I Can't Escape from You (written by Richard Whiting and Leo Robin), "Empty Saddles (written by Billy Hill), and "Round Up Lullaby" (Gertrude Ross and Charles Badger Clark). Another wonderful song that was a favorite song of mine for years was "I'm an Old Cowhand from the Rio Grande", which was written by a young Johnny Mercer. It was one of Mercer's first hits in Hollywood, and the version filmed for the movie was one of the most charming pieces of the film as the whole cast joined in the song. Martha Raye had a great solo effort with a song that became her signature tune until Ella Fitzgerald made it her own. "(If You Can't Sing It) You'll Have to Swing It (Mr. Paganini)" (written by Sam Coslow) was performed by Martha and accompanied by Bob Burns on his Bazooka, Louis Prima, and The Sons of the Pioneers. It was another high point of the film. Bing recorded most of the songs for Decca Records, and there was even one that Bing recorded called "The House That Jack Built for Jill" that was supposed to be in the film but was omitted from the released version.

Like some of the critics said in 1936, *Rhythm on the Range* was no western movie. John Wayne had nothing to be nervous about. However, the movie captured Bing really having fun. I have seen most Bing Crosby movies enough times to notice what films he enjoyed doing, and it really looked like Bing had fun on this flick. The movie was a great showcase for Bing's talent, which was still being discovered in 1936. I highly recommend this

breezy film for a fun afternoon viewing, and Bing Crosby definitely puts the rhythm into *Rhythm on the Range*!

David Lobosco
davidlobosco@yahoo.com

This is the Future

Martin McQuade has been taking a look at the new Blu-ray release of *King of Jazz*.

The Criterion Collection recently released the Blu-ray edition of King *of Jazz*. This landmark film underwent a painstaking restoration in 2016, described at length in my essay which appeared in the summer issue of *BING* (#173) covering its world premiere at The Museum of Modern Art. Here are excerpts:

The restoration of KOJ has long been a priority among film archivists and historians. Michael Daruty, Senior Vice President of Global Operations for the studio, explained why in his introduction to the MOMA screening. "In its day, it was special for a number of reasons. At its heart, the film was a lavish music showcase for Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. In Universal's history, this was one of its biggest productions of its time and earned an Academy Award for best art direction. The film introduced 27-year-old Bing Crosby in his first feature film role. Also, KOJ is also one of the few surviving two color Technicolor films in the world. The film was released in 1930 and again in an edited Production Code version in 1933."

The 1933 publicity for the film highlighting Bing and demoting Whiteman

Mr. Daruty elaborated upon the restoration. "Our goal was to restore the original 1930 version, which runs 105 minutes. We started with a soundtrack negative in the Universal vault About 60% of the picture comes from the original Technicolor two-color negative held by Universal. We undertook a worldwide search for elements to fill in the missing picture. Most of the remaining 40% of the picture came from vintage 35mm prints held by the Cohen Film Collection and the UCLA Film & Television Archives. One hard to find sketch was discovered on a print obtained from the Danish Film Institute. In order to retain as much sound as possible for any remaining shots that were missing we used pictures from our archives."

Mr. Daruty proceeded to explain that having visually scanned the film, the Universal restoration team performed extensive processing on high-resolution stock. In addition, the team conducted the restoration using both the 1930 and 1933 nitrate optical soundtrack. In addition to their own in-house restoration team, Universal consulted with experts in the field, including David Pierce, founder of the Media History Digital Library in Baltimore and James Layton, manager of the Film Preservation Center at MOMA. Their latest book, King of Jazz: Paul Whiteman's Technicolor Revue, published by Media History Press in 2016, chronicles this momentous undertaking.

All the splendors of this unsparing overhaul are vividly reproduced by this release, which boasts many supplements, such as a booklet with notes by film historian Farran Smith Nehme. Here are some pertinent remarks. *King of Jazz...was conceived as a must-see prestige musical about the most popular bandleader of the day. King of Jazz has come to be loved as a unique piece of Hollywood recklessness, as a record of stage acts whose memory might otherwise have died with their audience, as the apex of early Technicolor and a time capsule of American Popular Music. The film has historical significance for several reasons, one being that it's the movie debut of a crooner named Bing Crosby. Der Bingle sings 'Music Hath Charms" ("though it's classy or jazz") over the credits and appears in several sequences with The Rhythm Boys, a vocal group that often performed with Whiteman. Crosby might have made an even bigger impression had he not gone on a bender during filming, cracked up his car (on Hollywood Boulevard, no less) and been sentenced to sixty days in jail, having had the poor judgement to crack wise with the judge. A furious Whiteman replaced him with the decidedly less charismatic John Boles for what would have been the singer's one solo, "The Song of the Dawn." Still, those ears, that ease of manner and that glorious voice make the rest of The Rhythm Boys recede into the background.*

Nehme sheds some light on the way the performers look in *KOJ. Two-color renders white actors' complexions in rosy shades of pink and does a great job with greens and reds. But most yellows are impossible, and true blue is out of the question*

The film has an introduction by Gary Giddins. These are his comments concerning Bing. *King of Jazz is sort of an ice cream sundae of a movie, and it's meant to be deliciously entertaining. You may not like every single sequence in it. Sometimes it's entertaining in a*

conventional way, sometimes it will make your jaws drop...Many cinematic innovations originated in KOJ, such as "The Broadway Crane," first used in the 1929 film, Broadway, directed by Paul Fejos, the first choice to helm King of Jazz. King of Jazz spearheaded the musical film explosion that occurred two years later. It had a dismal opening. It was the right picture at the wrong time. It's about as good a variety show from that period as you can expect to see.

Paul Whiteman was a man of many parts who harvested influences of jazz, which was anything that had a beat that people danced to. It was a rebellious music.

The first person he hired in an attempt to modernize the orchestra, to make it younger, to give it a rhythmic jolt, was Bing Crosby, and his partner Al Rinker. Young Bing Crosby was the first great jazz singer to make it into the mainstream. They really could swing and they really had a jazz feeling. The old guard of the band resented the new guard, such as Beiderbecke, Venuti and Lang. They thought improvisation was beneath them.

Michael Feinstein contributed a short feature with several Bing references. *From the minute the movie begins, to hear that Grofe arrangement and that song "Music Hath Charms" sung by the voice of Bing Crosby off screen - to me, it just galvanizes the soul. Oh, how I wish I had a time capsule to be able to go back and witness the filming of this movie, particularly the exploits of Bing Crosby who, during this period of his life was living large. He partied a lot, drank a lot, and he also had this extraordinary talent that is seen as it is blooming in that film. You still see that transitional thing happening in him where he's still part of The Rhythm Boys, but the fact that he is going to break away from that is so evident. There's a certain kind of casual quality to Crosby that belies the fact that he worked very hard and was very, very focused. He came off as this very congenial, laid back guy and yet had this steel will behind all of that that was one of the things that propelled him to his tremendous stardom.*

1930 was an amazing year with technology changing in every way; in the movies with this two-strip Technicolor, recorded sound with the microphone only being a few years old which changed the way people performed music, the way songs were heard. Crosby represented the modern style of singing, in contrast to the way songs were performed in the past. KOJ shows stars taking a step forward, while some of the other people in the film represented the vaudeville style. The contrast between John Boles and Crosby is palpable. The sound of The Rhythm Boys is so contemporary but also rooted in the ability to connect with an audience in a more personal way. It seems probably the most modern part of the film. Crosby was a crooner. He didn't have to shout. He used the microphone to speak for him so he came along at the perfect time. KOJ is a fascinating mixture of old style music and the shepherding in of a new sound of music, a new style, a new intimacy that film was only just discovering at that time. The revelation of KOJ is that it captures something happening at that time. There is a determination that just pops off the screen. It is so compelling. Every frame has something fascinating.

Essays by preservationists Layton and Pierce explore the origins of Walter Lantz' and Bill Nolan's *A Fable in Jazz* cartoon that "employs the vocal skills of Bing Crosby," while showcasing "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit," originally created by Ub Iwerks for Disney in 1927. Fragments later became part of two 1930 Lantz and Nolan "Oswald" cartoons, *My Pal Paul,* starring an animated Whiteman, and *Africa.* Both appear in the Blu-Ray package and both partially consist of music and animation from *KOJ.* A portion of the storyboard for *A Fable in Jazz* is shown alongside footage featuring the spiritual, "My Lord Delivered Daniel," revealing how it served as an initial roadmap for the animation. The storyboard ends with an inscription. "This was the first animated cartoon that was produced in Technicolor and the song was sung by Bing Crosby. Walter Lantz, April 5, 1990. Burbank." One section offers pages of the original score of this animation, with a direction reading, "Rhythm Boys sing." One essay contains an excerpt of a Whiteman home movie taken at his recreational lodge shows Bing seated outside.

These bonus pieces share abundant revelations. For instance, the page turning in *King of Jazz* replicates the way KOJ's director John Murray Anderson's *Almanacs* originally appeared on stage. The film also echoes the way Whiteman presented his band on stage. An intriguing opening title as seen in the 1933 rerelease has Bing's performance of "Music Hath Charms" segue into the clarinet glissando of "Rhapsody in Blue." Of special interest are three comedy sketches that were added to the rerelease, as well as *I Know Everybody and Everybody's Racket,* a 1933 short starring Walter Winchell and Whiteman's band, and *All American,* a 1929 short presenting Anderson's "Melting Pot of Music" number staged as a live prologue for Paramount-Publix Theaters.

Giddins, bandleader Vince Giordano and cultural historian Gene Seymour provide commentary during the film. Here are some Bing-related observations and exchanges.

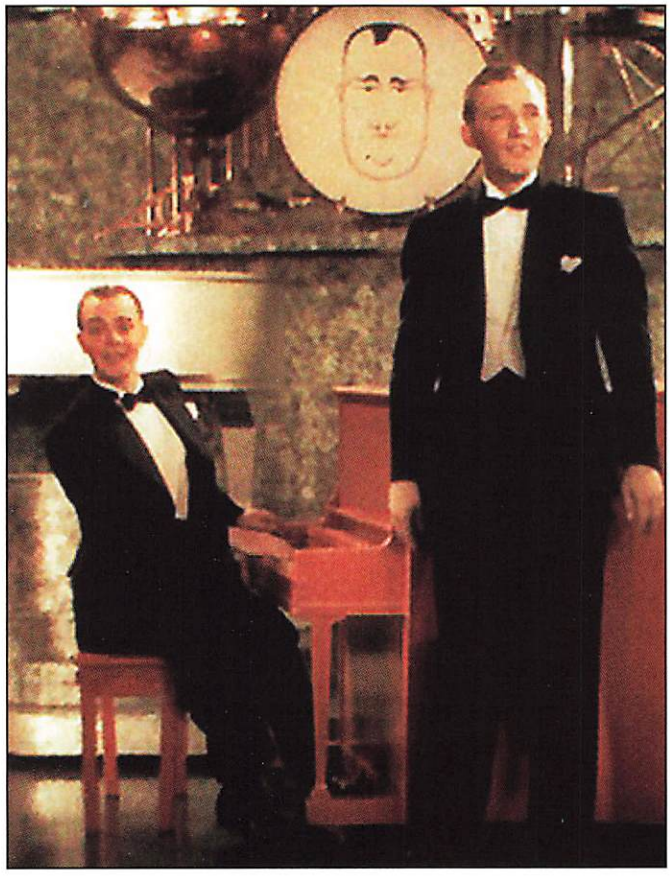
GG: *In the "So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together" number, there seems to be a racial concept here and it builds on a song that Eva Taylor had done just a couple of years earlier called, "I'm a Little Blackbird Looking For a Bluebird."*

GS: *There is a shock to seeing this jump out at you after the previous numbers we saw, especially. It's almost as if we're seeing the face of jazz as we have come to know it in that sequence. We didn't see this in the others. That's why it almost seems like you're peering at the future when you see The Rhythm Boys*

sing together.

GG (expanding upon the incident that the booklet references)*: The Brox Sisters join The Rhythm Boys in "A Bench in the Park." Bobbie Brox married William Perlberg, producer of The Country Girl, as well as Jimmy Van Heusen. Bing sent them a note on their wedding, saying how great it was to see two of his oldest friends marrying each other. While they were rehearsing, Bing had been drinking and wanted to sit on Bobbie's lap. Bobbie tossed him off and they had a big fight. Bing went over to the lodge, had a few more drinks, picked up a woman, drove her back to her hotel, hit another car, the woman flew out of the car.*

GS: *It's at points like "Happy Feet" when the movie goes into a different drive, a different gear, really, musically. This is the future!*



The Rhythm Boys sing "Happy Feet"

GG: *The "Happy Feet" number shows The Rhythm Boys at their best, briefly, having a good time with this wonderfully rhythmic song. This is one of the last times we'll see Crosby's thinning hair without the toupee.*

VG: *During "Happy Feet" Barris and Rinker are playing 66 note pianos, known as studio pianos or "Tom Thumb" pianos. They used to tour with those and bring them around to all the clubs.*

GG: *The satire of Magic Lantern songs, "Has Anybody Seen Our Nellie," hearkens to a song illustrated with a slide show that Bing and Rinker sang in 1924 at The Clemmer Theater in Spokane. "By the Light of The Silvr'y Moon" in Birth of the Blues recreates this tradition. The director Victor Schertzinger, or somebody else on the production, managed to go to the Clemmer Theater and found a film that he had actually done. Schertzinger double-printed the actual slides which were in color on Technicolor stock. It's the only color in a black and white movie... Bing would have been ludicrous in Boles' cowboy garb singing "Song of the Dawn," which Ager and Yellen wrote for him. Bing dodged a bullet not having to dress as a gaucho and try to emote this thing. When he later recorded the song with Whiteman, he gave it a certain jump and lightness, and made a nice recording of it. He wasn't ideally suited for this.*

GS: *It would have been radical, actually, if Bing sang the rendition you're talking about. I'm sure Boles was betting on a matinee idol career. Whereas, nobody thought Bing could be a film star. He was turned down by every studio. His ears were too big, he was losing his hair, he had a paunch, he defied all the rules.*

GG: *That would have been fun.* (This exchange seems a bit odd, since to these ears Bing's vocal refrain with Whiteman is similarly stentorian.)

GG: *"The Property Man' scene with Jack White has an absurdist, stream of consciousness feel to it. Venuti, a notorious practical joker, appears in this scene. He was banned from the Crosby home after Dixie, Bing's wife, bought some very expensive cane chairs. They got drunk and Venuti wagered that he could put his head through them and did. Barris also is in this sketch. When Pathe signed The Rhythm Boys for a short, they bet their money that Barris would be the star. He was such a personality.*

(This segment is now enlarged by recently rediscovered footage.)

There are so many things to savor on this delectable disc. Among them is the sensational glimpse, now luminously refurbished, of Bing enthralling filmgoers for the very first time. Here he is, bulging with expressiveness, on the cusp of a career that spanned the entire Golden Age of American sound film. Bing remains modern, as he was almost ninety years ago. The same may be said of this "Super, Super, Special, Special Production," finally available with all its long-tarnished glories on radiant view. Both were - and remain - visionary.

Martin McQuade

Bing Crosby – Swinging on a Star

In BING #173 (page 33) your editor gave details of the quarterly magazine *Films of the Golden Age* which has been published since 1962 and had never had a feature about Bing. In view of this, I duly submitted an article and after being slightly amended by the editor, it was included in the

magazine's winter 2016 issue together with 4 pages of photographs. It is reproduced here for ICC members who will probably know the facts only too well but bear in mind that the article was aimed at people who may have only scant knowledge of Mr. Crosby and his work.

Bing Crosby died in 1977 and is gradually being forgotten as new generations, devoted to today's entertainers mostly ignore those who came before them. Some younger people only know Bing as the man who comes out of hiding every once in a while to sing his holiday classics. How different this is from Bing's glory days. I'll never forget the time I met a man who, while recalling Bing singing "White Christmas" during World War II, broke down in tears. His emotional bond to Bing, and to that very special song, was so strong that it remained unbroken some 60 years later. To understand the impact Bing Crosby had on his times, you only need to grasp the fact that this man was but one of millions who felt much the same about Bing and his music.

In my own case, viewing his film *Blue Skies,* in re-release in the UK, was the experience that confirmed me as a Crosby fan. That was in 1959, and ever since then I have wanted to know more about this apparently easy-going singer with the deep and soothing voice.

The fourth of seven children, he was born into a modest middle class family in 1903 in Tacoma, Washington and christened Harry Lillis Crosby. After the family moved inland to Spokane in 1906, young Harry was christened "Bing" after a character in a nationally syndicated comic feature called "The Bingville Bugle" that ran in the local newspaper, The Spokesman-Review newspaper.

Bing attended Gonzaga University and studied law, but dropped out to pursue a career in show-business. With his friend, Al Rinker, he developed an act which eventually was spotted by Paul Whiteman, then one of the biggest names in the entertainment world. Whiteman added a third man, Harry Barris, to the act in 1927 and the trio was christened The Rhythm Boys. They enjoyed great success during the next three years and they made a film with Whiteman, the famous *King of Jazz* which recently has been restored to all its two-strip Technicolor glory.

The Rhythm Boys left Whiteman in 1930 and had a long run at the popular Cocoanut Grove in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles with Gus Arnheim's orchestra. Bing's solos tended to stand out from the group and he was given a solo recording contract. The Rhythm Boys eventually split up and went their separate ways. Crosby's records were doing well in the charts and he made an impact with a short appearance in the Douglas Fairbanks movie *Reaching for the Moon* (1930). Mack Sennett then signed him to make six short films and these helped develop the Crosby image of the easy-going crooner. In September 1931, the singer made his first national radio broadcast and his career really took off. An extended season in New York at the Paramount theatres in New York and Brooklyn followed and then Hollywood beckoned.

The Big Broadcast (1932) was his first starring role and the success of his initial full-length film brought him a contract with Paramount and he began a regular pattern of making three films a year. Bing was somewhat wooden in those early films but he gradually developed as an actor. At first his ears were glued back as they were rather prominent but the hot lights often loosened the spirit gum and the ears would pop out. After a couple of years by which time Crosby had firmly established himself, he refused to put up with this anatomical tampering and the ears were set free for the rest of his movie career.

During the 1930s, the crooner's films were escapist yarns with Crosby singing three or four songs in each. It was ideal entertainment for those Depression years and Crosby's radio program, *The Kraft Music Hall,* plus his many hit records consolidated his appeal. It was in 1934 that he first appeared in the Quigley top-ten of box-office stars based on ticket sales. He would appear in the list another 14 times with the final appearance in 1954. The 1940s were Crosby's peak years and he topped the Quigley chart for five successive years in that decade.

Probably his first significant switch from his usual role of a likeable and carefree singer was in *Mississippi* (1935) with W. C. Fields. Bing played a man from the north who refuses to conform to the code of honor of the antebellum South and accept a duel with a love rival. This leads to his being rejected by his lover and he is branded a coward and banished. Later, he gets involved in a fight and by accident a man is killed. He becomes known as 'the singing killer' and this adds an interesting twist to the story.

The singing killer in action

The roles and the scripts got better and Crosby was seen to advantage in the Cole Porter musical *Anything*

Goes (1936), a western *Rhythm on the Range* (1936) and the Hawaiian themed *Waikiki Wedding* (1937). A song from the last-named film – "Sweet Leilani" – won the Academy Award for Best Song. From 1934, when the first Oscar was awarded for "Best Song", until 1960, Bing Crosby introduced more nominated songs than any other singer. His fourteen nominations produced four Oscar winners, ("Sweet Leilani", "White Christmas", "Swinging on a Star" and "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening"), a record that has never been matched

In 1939, Paramount dusted off a project called *Follow the Sun* that had been on their shelves since 1936. It was originally intended as a Crosby vehicle and Burns & Allen were at one time to join Bing in the film. However, an inspired choice was made to replace them with Bob Hope and the selection of exotic beauty Dorothy Lamour as the love interest. The film was retitled *Road to Singapore* and an iconic series of films was launched. There were seven *Roads* in all (*Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, Rio, Bali* and *Hong Kong*). Hope and Crosby used to ad-lib frequently while filming scenes and they both used their own scriptwriters to add dialogue which they hoped would surprise the other. This added a freshness to the films and as the series developed the "fourth wall" was frequently broken with the actors and even camels and a moose speaking directly to the audience.

As the 1940s unwound, Bing made some most entertaining films such as *Rhythm on the River* and *Birth of the Blues* (both with Mary Martin). Then came a milestone, *Holiday Inn* (1942) with Fred Astaire as co-star. The songs were by Irving Berlin and it was widely expected that a song called "Be Careful, It's My Heart" would be the big hit. But it was wartime and the words of another song came to mean so much to those separated from their loved ones and "White Christmas" became a huge hit worldwide. It was in the Billboard charts at Christmas time for 20 consecutive years.

During the war, Bing toured extensively entertaining the troops and in 1944 he came to Europe sometimes performing not far from the front lines. At every show, he would be asked to sing "White Christmas" and he was a little reluctant to do so because many a serviceman would be reduced to tears by this poignant reminder of home—but he always obliged. It was in 2003 that I met the man mentioned earlier, who, while serving in France in 1944, saw Bing perform. An Army veteran, the man tried to describe the event but when he began to tell me of Bing's singing of "White Christmas" he broke down and cried.

Bing Crosby was doing very well after the release of *Holiday Inn* but things were going to get even better. He was approached to play the part of a priest in a film provisionally titled *The Padre* but eventually called *Going My Way* (1944) which was to be directed by Leo McCarey, one of the top comedy directors in Hollywood. Crosby was reluctant at first because as a Catholic he was concerned that the Church would not approve of it. However McCarey eventually persuaded him to take on the role of Father O'Malley. Much to Bing's surprise he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance and even more to his surprise he actually won it! The film picked up seven Oscars in all including Best Song. Barry Fitzgerald, playing the part of the old priest Father Fitzgibbon, also was a winner, picking up a Best Supporting Actor award. Fitzgerald had also been nominated as Best Actor, the last time this was allowed to happen. It would turn out that Bing's qualms about taking the role were unfounded. Pope Pius XII saw the picture several times and wrote a letter in which he described his enjoyment of the film, saying he thought it good to have the priesthood so humanized.

The following year, Bing reprised his role as Father O'Malley in *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) and he was again nominated for the Academy Award. (This time he would lose to Ray Milland in *The Lost Weekend*.) Ingrid Bergman was Crosby's co-star in *Bells*, playing the part of Sister Benedict who runs the St. Mary's Church School. The two characters get on well until they disagree over the treatment of one the girl pupils and suddenly Sister Benedict is told that she is to be transferred to another school. She does not know that she has tuberculosis, at a very early stage, and the doctor feels that she should not be told. It is intended that she be moved to a place with a drier climate. Sister Benedict thinks it is because of her disagreement with Fr. O'Malley that she is being reassigned. In a very moving final act, the Sister is leaving the school and Fr. O'Malley is watching her. He is torn about what he should do and eventually he calls her back. He then tells her the real reason for her transfer. She is relieved to hear this and she promises to get well quickly. Words can't do justice to the scene which is played so beautifully by both actors. It has me in tears every time I watch it!

The final scene in The Bells of St. Mary's

An amusing story comes to us from this film. When Ingrid Bergman played that final scene, she asked the director (Leo McCarey again) if she could do it once more. At the end of this second take she added an unexpected climax by throwing her arms around Bing and kissing him full on the mouth. Crosby nearly fell down with shock and McCarey shouted "Cut! Cut! Cut!" The consulting priest on the set ran forward protesting that a nun cannot kiss a priest. The general consternation evaporated, however, when they all realized that Ingrid was having a little joke on them.

I mentioned *Blue Skies* (1946) earlier and this Technicolor production was a big box-office success. Packed with Irving Berlin songs, it also featured Bing and Fred Astaire at the top of their game. These last-named films plus the *Road* movies made Crosby the top box-office star of the 1940s. *Variety* magazine's list of the top-ten films of each year in the USA shows the following Crosby entries:
Road to Singapore (placed in top ten) (1940)
Road to Zanzibar (placed in top ten) (1941)
Holiday Inn (No. 8) (1942)
Going My Way (No. 1) (1944)
The Bells of St. Mary's (No. 1) (1946)
Blue Skies (No. 3) (1946)
Road to Utopia (No. 4) (1946)
Welcome Stranger (No. 7) (1947)
Road to Rio (No. 1) (1948)
The Emperor Waltz (No. 7) (1948)
White Christmas (No. 1) (1954)
The Country Girl (No. 6) (1955)
High Society (No. 4) (1956)

Welcome Stranger had reunited Bing with Barry Fitzgerald and this time they were both doctors. *The Emperor Waltz* was a glossy Billy Wilder film using Jasper Park in Canada for the location shots. Set in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1901, the film has Bing playing an American phonograph salesman who falls for a Countess played by Joan Fontaine. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949) is based on Mark Twain's classic novel with Crosby as a man who is whisked from the year 1905 to 528 AD following a blow on the head.

Some of the films made by the crooner in the late 40s and early 50s were perhaps a little disappointing. *Top O' the Morning* set in Ireland was cheaply made in black and white with Barry Fitzgerald playing a police sergeant who is investigating the theft of the Blarney Stone, while Bing was an insurance investigator. *Mr. Music* (1950), *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) and *Just for You* (1952) were moderately successful but it was a time when Crosby's record sales were falling as newer singers such as Frankie Laine, Eddie Fisher, Guy Mitchell and Johnnie Ray were in their ascendancy.

In 1952, Bing and Bob Hope made their sixth Road film, *Road to Bali*, the only one made in color. Although not reaching Variety's top-ten, it was very well received with Bosley Crowther of the New York Times saying "*Road to Bali* is a whoopingly hilarious film, full of pure crazy situations and deliciously discourteous gags, all played with evident relish and split-second timing by the team."

Then Crosby signed up to make a dramatic film called *Little Boy Lost* based on the book of the same name by Marghanita Laski. He played a radio newscaster who returns to France in 1948 to trace his eight-year-old son who has been displaced following the chaos of war and the death of his mother. With Bing's wife Dixie Lee becoming seriously ill in 1952, he delayed his departure as long as possible before flying to Paris to do location shooting. A few days after his return to Los Angeles, Dixie Lee died from cancer. When Crosby began filming again he had to undertake a scene in which the death of his wife in the film is discussed. It must have been most harrowing to film. The movie has a very heart-rending and unexpected finale and it's another one that moves me deeply. *Little Boy Lost* was yet another reminder that Bing was so unlike other singing talents who floundered in front of a camera. Easily equal to many of the best veteran actors, he proved his dramatic ability over and over.

A sequel to *Holiday Inn* had been planned for some years and it finally came to pass with *White Christmas*. The top box-office attraction of 1954, its return is welcomed every Christmas as it pops up on television and even at select cinemas across the USA. The same thing happened in the UK in 2008 when it was shown for just one day at cinemas throughout the country. My wife and I went along to our local multiplex to see it and had to stand in line to get through to the screens. Assuming that it was for one of the current blockbusters, I queried an attendant. "It's for *White Christmas,"* she replied. "It's been like this all day. It's a complete sell-out." And so it was. We found ourselves chatting to those around us before the film started—something that doesn't

normally happen—and when the closing credits came up, everyone clapped spontaneously — a lovely moment.

Straight from *White Christmas* the singer undertook a role in *The Country Girl*, the Clifford Odets play which had been successful on Broadway in 1950. Initially unhappy about Grace Kelly playing his wife he soon changed his mind. Playing an alcoholic singer, Crosby gave a truly outstanding performance and again was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor. (Marlon Brando would nose him out for *On the Waterfront*). Grace Kelly would prove herself a worthy co-star by winning the Oscar for Best Actress.

A remake of *Anything Goes* (1956) was Bing's next film and he was teamed with Donald O'Connor and Mitzi Gaynor. It was a pleasant if uninspired musical and it was Crosby's last film for Paramount after 22 years. Next he made an outstanding movie for MGM – *High Society* (1956). A musical version of *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) with a wonderful cast including Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Grace Kelly and Celeste Holm, with songs by Cole Porter. "True Love" was the hit song but "Well Did You Evah?" (with Sinatra) and "Now You Has Jazz" (with Louis Armstrong) were very popular too. The performance of the last-named song produced spontaneous applause when the film was first shown.

A non-singing dramatic role in *Man on Fire* (1957) followed with Crosby playing a man fighting a custody battle with his ex-wife. Bing's acting in a difficult and unattractive role was excellent, but the film, made with a largely unknown cast, was not a great commercial success. He returned to a role as a priest in *Say One for Me* (1959). The review in Hollywood's Citizen News summed it up. "For visual appeal, this new 20th. Century-Fox film, in color and CinemaScope, is a world-beater. . . . A handsome production from start to finish, it misses only in the departments of story, direction and acting, three important categories, nonetheless." Bing played Father Conroy and his appearance surprised fans as he seemed to have aged noticeably since his last film.

I enjoyed *High Time* (1960) in which Crosby essayed the part of a 51 year-old millionaire widower who decides to go back to college to earn the education he missed as a youth. A pleasant light-weight film which was not critically acclaimed however. An important song came from the movie though and this was "The Second Time Around" which Sinatra later used effectively on records. Bing continued to make walk-on appearances in other people's films and his next starring role was with Bob Hope in *The Road to Hong Kong.* Filmed in the UK, unfortunately in black and white, the critical reception was favorable and the box-office takings were quite acceptable. Nowadays, it is widely considered to be the weakest of the *Road* series and it seems more dated than those filmed 20 years previously. Fans of Dorothy Lamour were also irked as she had to concede the femme lead to sexy young Joan Collins and accept what amounts to a cameo.

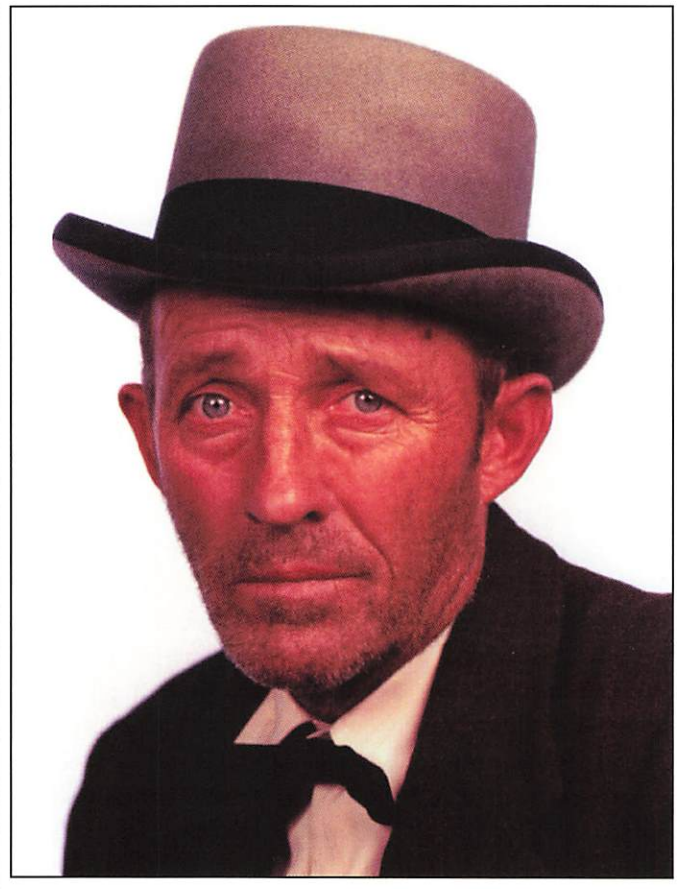
Crosby was tempted to join the Rat Pack for their final film together, *Robin and the Seven Hoods* (1964), and many think that he stole the film with his appearance as Allan A. Dale halfway through the movie. He had three good songs too, including "Style" with Sinatra and Dean Martin.

Bing's last starring role was in the remake of the John Ford classic *Stagecoach* (1966). Taking the role of Doc Boone for which Thomas Mitchell earned the 1939 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in the original, he acquitted himself well. Naturally, the film overall didn't measure up to the John Ford original but Bing received praise for his acting.

"Crosby projects eloquently the jaded worldliness of a down-and-outer who still has not lost all self-respect." (Variety)

"In a decided departure from the norm, Bing Crosby, as the unshaven, sodden surgeon, is casual, natural, glib and mildly funny." (New York Times)

"The best performance in this version comes from none other than Bing Crosby, playing a drunken doctor, with bloodshot eyes, stubbled face, and a splendid sense of timing." (Daily Express)



Doc Boone

One indicator of the greatness of Bing's career comes from a listing of the top movie box office stars of the twentieth century. Based on estimated ticket sales over the years, the findings were published on the Internet in 2000, and showed the following:

Star	estimated ticket sales
1. Clark Gable	1,168,300,000
2. John Wayne	1,114,000,000
3. Bing Crosby	1,077,900,000
4. James Stewart	981,900,000
5. Cary Grant	942,500,000
6. Spencer Tracy	937,200,000
7. Gary Cooper	878,600,000
8. Mickey Rooney	867,900,000
9. Harrison Ford	852,700,000
10. Gregory Peck	728,000,000

Cinema admissions were, of course, much higher in the years before television which perhaps helps to explain why so few of today's stars were in the top ten when the survey was published in 2000. Clark Gable's top position must owe much to the incredible success of *Gone with the Wind* and John Wayne's prolific and long career deservedly puts him in second position. What is amazing here—and a real tribute to Bing's popularity over many years—is to see him so well placed above those who are more often commonly perceived as legendary Hollywood greats. And aside from the remarkably versatile Mickey Rooney, only Bing can boast a great musical talent in addition to his excellent acting.

In his 34 year movie career, Crosby starred in 54 feature-length films as well as numerous short films and he also made many significant guest appearances. From light-weight musicals to classics of the genre, and on to meaty dramatic roles, Bing Crosby was undoubtedly a unique talent whose importance to the Golden Age of Films is difficult to exaggerate.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Cinerama's Russian Adventure

Scott Payne picked up the Blu-ray version of this film and it includes a special feature in which the sons of producer Hal Dennis - Hal Dennis Jr. and Craig Dennis - discuss working with their father on the project. Scott has transcribed some of the dialogue which concerns Bing, There remains a lot of untranscribed tech talk before and after the Crosby content.

Craig Dennis: So we started out with a single camera on Bing Crosby. It seems to me we did that on purpose. Is that how it - 'cause I wasn't there with Bing?

Hal Dennis Jr: Oh yah, yah sure. Cinerama did that with Lowell Thomas a lot. I think maybe all of the times he introduced the show and it's very, very impressive when you go from a standard theatre screen. Actually it wasn't 'cause Cinerama is even taller but then it opens up to 300 percent of that.

CD: A huge, huge screen.

HD: Yah. Yah. Much bigger. Do you remember the relationship Dad had with Bing Crosby?

CD: Well I remember what he had with Basil Grillo but not so much with Bing Crosby.

HD: Basil was Dad's best friend and Basil was also Bing Crosby's controller, his money man, but both Basil, Bing, Homer Oewar, Homer McCoy (sic) as well -

CD: Homer McCoy.

HD: - were all avid outdoorsman as well as Dad. We got to go once in a while with "the group" of the guys and that was my first introduction to Mr. Crosby out in the field not in the studios.

CD: How did that transpire into Dad's relationship as you knew then?

HD: I only met him one time at that point. Dad knew him but they needed somebody to narrate this, an introduction to "Russian Adventure". First thing that came to mind was Bing.

CD: Oh there's no question it was mutual. Bing wanted to do it.

HD: Oh absolutely.

CD: Dad wanted him to do it but you were telling me the story about when you actually met Bing Crosby the second time during the studio.

HD: That was kind of funny. We had a 6:00 show, I believe it was, so when the camera got there, sound got there, we had the doors open and we were ready for them. And then Mr. Crosby was supposed to show up

around 8. So Dad had directed all the cameras where he wanted them and the stage props were all set by the prop guys, etc. And then Dad pulled me over about 7:40, 7:30, something like that and said: "Hey, it's 7:30, 7:40. I want you to go to the front door and don't open it but peek out and see if there's a limousine out there and come back and let me know it's there." So I did. I came back and said: "Yah. There's a limousine out there." He said: "Fine. That's Mr. Crosby's limousine." And so I said: "Should I just go tell him that we're ready for him?"

CD: Come on in -

HD: "No. Don't do that," he said. "He'll be there. Right on time." I said OK. So I got up there and peek through the door at 7:50, at 7:52, 7:54, 7:55, 7:56. All of a sudden the chauffeur gets out, walks around the car, opens the door. Mr. Crosby puts his paper down and walks to the front door and I open it at about a minute before 8. And I say: "Good morning, Mr. Crosby. I'm Hal Dennis." *And you should have seen his face.*

CD: (laughs)

HD: "Junior." And he said: "Glad to meet you, Hal Dennis Jr. Didn't we meet once before?" And I said: "Yes, sir. Hunting trip a couple of years ago. Right this way, sir. I'll show you to the set." "Thank you," and off we went.

CD: Just out of curiosity, did he - I know that we bought the clothes for that particular shoot. Typical. Did he wear it? Did he bring in the outfit?

HD: No. No. He went in the dressing room and changed to the uniform of the day.

CD: High Divorce (sic), I think. Right?

HD: I believe so. Yah.

CD: (laughs)

HD: I remember that morning getting there early and the set decorator built the set the day before, set it all up and there again, to help, they explained to Mr. Crosby about the balalaika. I got up there and helped him with the camera and showed him the Cinerama camera that had three eyes. Then Bing comes in and gets comfortable with it in fact, spins it around.

BC: Its three eyes can see far, wide and deep. Cameras just like this one captured some very unique experiences that are going to enable us to participate in an adventure together. A Russian adventure…

Tinseltown Talks: Beverly Washburn's favorite co-stars

Nick Thomas writing in *Tinseltown Talks* on June 27 interviews Beverly Washburn, who appeared with Bing in *Here Comes the Groom.*

Beginning her career as a talented child actress, Beverly Washburn appeared in some classic 1950s films including *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), *Shane* (1953) and *Old Yeller* (1957) as well as dozens of classic TV shows. She also worked alongside Hollywood's most popular actors and her list of favorites is long (see www.beverlywashburn.com).

While she appeared in several "Wagon Train" episodes, her favorite was 'The Tobias Jones Story' where Lou Costello plays a drunk accused of murder – not only a rare dramatic role for the comedian but one of his final acting appearances.

"I was a big Abbott & Costello fan, so it was a thrill to work with Lou," said Washburn from Las Vegas where she has lived for over 20 years. "I just loved him, he was such as sweet man. But he was so used to ad-libbing in the comedy routines that he actually found it hard to stick to the script. When he forgot a line, he would look into the camera and say, 'So how are ya?' which always made me giggle."

Washburn recalls rehearsing a scene where she had to push Costello's intoxicated character into a wagon. "He leaned back and said 'push my biscuits' (buttocks) into the wagon as hard as I could. I'd never heard that expression before! While he was a joy to work with, I do remember there was a kind of sadness about him which I only later realized was because he never really got over his young son drowning."

Costello died a few months after filming.

In *Here Comes the Groom* (1951), Washburn plays Bing Crosby's adopted daughter.

"People always ask me was he mean because of the bad wrap he got over the years from the stories told by his son from his first marriage," she said. "But he was so kind to me. He gave me a beautiful doll one Christmas and I was on his Christmas card list for years. He signed a couple of photographs for me and wrote 'For Beverly, hope to play in your next picture' on one and 'To my co-star Beverly' on another. Those are mementos from my career that I still treasure."

The signed photo from Bing to Beverly.

Washburn appeared in the 1956 film version of *The Long Ranger.*

"Oh, I loved this one – I'm kidnapped by Indians and the Lone Ranger comes to my rescue!" she said, laughing. "The location shots were filmed in Kanab, Utah, on the site that is now an animal sanctuary called Best Friends. Clayton Moore was just wonderful and one of my funniest memories was while we were all relaxing by the pool one weekend. In his contract, he wasn't allowed to be photographed without his mask on. Well, a lady recognized him at the pool and asked for a photo so he jumped up and grabbed his mask. Seeing the Lone Ranger in just swimming trunks and a mask was hilarious."

In a 1956 episode (The Key) of the TV drama series "Telephone Time," Washburn played a deaf-mute.

"I also had a scarf tied around my eyes because they were supposed to be burned from a fever. When I was cast, the producer said it would be a most challenging role since I couldn't emote vocally with lines or with my eyes. So all my emotion had to come from within."

Six years later, Patty Duke faced a similar acting challenge when she starred as Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker." Washburn worked with Duke in a 1965 episode of "The Patty Duke Show."

"We never did talk about the similar characters we had played, but I'll always remember her as being so down to earth. I'm 5-feet tall and so was she, and I played her school girlfriend. The first day on set I was in the wardrobe trailer trying to find something to wear. Patty came in and told the wardrobe lady to give me one of her outfits which was so touching because not many stars would do that."

In "The New Loretta Young Show" 1962-63 season, Young played a widow with 7 children. Washburn was a series regular as one of the kids.

"She actually called me herself at home to ask me on the show and I was thrilled because she was such a sweet woman," recalled Washburn. "She was very hands-on throughout and was involved in everything since it was her show – the makeup, wardrobe, hair, even the directing. It was one of those shows where we all felt like family. We'd go out on weekends together, have parties or go to the beach. Loretta would have us all over to her house for dinner."

Washburn was in her early 20s when she appeared in *Spider Baby*, a Lon Chaney Jr. dark horror comedy blending murder, madness, and mayhem into the now cult classic. Filmed in 1964, legal issues held up release until several years later.

"It was a very bizarre movie made on a budget of just $65,000," explained Washburn. "But I was excited to work with Lon Chaney and he turned out to be so dear. He wanted the role so badly but they couldn't come up with his salary so he turned it down at first. When he heard they might offer it to John Carradine, he changed his mind. I remember one scene where he is crying on the porch and those were his real tears because he was so invested in the role."

Washburn, too, possessed that talent.

"I could cry on cue which was usually required for playing the poor little orphan girl-type roles I often had. I would try to feel what the character was feeling and it would invariably make me cry. I suppose I've always been an emotional person, too. My brother would tease me and say I cried at supermarket openings!"

More than just a young actress who could cry on demand, her co-stars were quick to praise young Beverly's mature acting skills. After they worked together, Lou Costello publicly acknowledged her for helping bring out his credible dramatic performance.

In her book, "Reel Tears: The Beverly Washburn Story, Take Two" re-released in 2013 by BearManor Media, Beverly shares many more stories from her career. She says she has been "blessed to work with so many wonderful people in the entertainment business."

"It hasn't all be roses, as I talk about in my book," she adds, "but I have a lot of fond memories for sure."

Nick Thomas

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for over 700 newspapers and magazines. See www.tinseltowntalks.com.

Michael Crampton (left) and Wig admire the azaleas at Wig's home

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

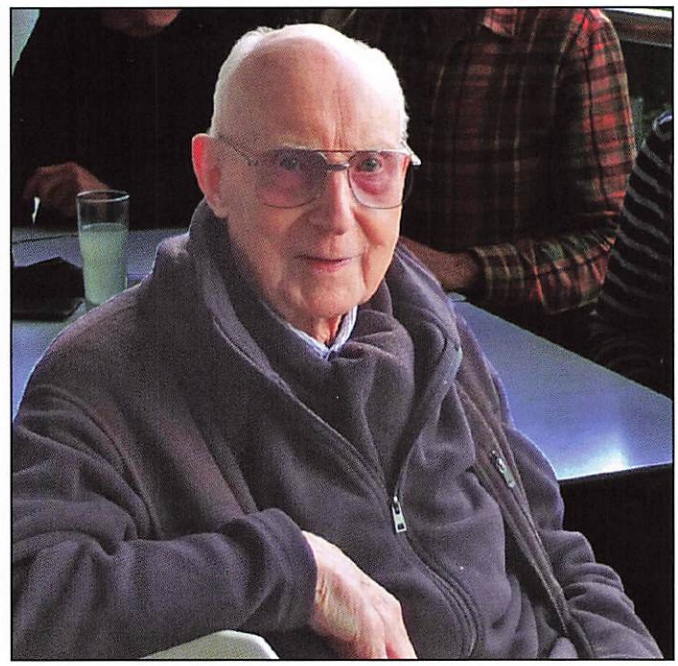
Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia.

This morning (June 28) I saw a rare appearance of Bing on Aussie TV. Our ABC-TV national network is showing replays of *Antiques Roadshow* and this morning was an episode from 2009 filmed at the Dulwich Art Gallery. A lady had brought some memorabilia concerning Anne Shelton, including an impressive ring and some photos. One of the photos showed Bing and Anne Shelton, presumably taken in August 1944 at the Queensberry All-Services Club. The 'expert' who was examining the items commented to the effect that 'There she is with Bing Crosby'. Bing was sans toupee and I daresay the photo is well known to Crosby enthusiasts.

Bing and Anne sing "Easter Parade" at the Queensberry All-Services Club.

On another matter, today I listened to Howard Leader's program of 24 June during which he mentioned you and, as you'd know, played Bing's 'Red River Valley' but I think he confused your location with mine as I'm sure he said you are from Bathurst. *(Editor: He did!)* We can forgive him, can't we? He did play a request of mine, a track by Michael Holliday as the only recording of his I'd heard was 'The Folks Who Live on the Hill'. Howard chose 'The Story of My Life'. I'll email Howard with thanks and suggest that he plays more tracks from the Crosby CDs which he had received from Stan White.

Last week Helen and I attended a beaut luncheon in Sydney which David Currington arranged as a get together of a few Bing fans. David did something similar last year. There is an amazing link between Bing in London in 1944 and the 2018 luncheon which David arranged.



Percy Waters at the RSL luncheon in June.

The sensation which Bing Crosby created on 27th August 1944 when he sang at the Queensberry All-Services Club is well-known to Crosby enthusiasts. One member of the audience that day was a twenty-five year-old member of the RAF named Percy Waters. After the war Percy migrated to Australia and after living in Sydney for many years moved westwards over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst where we met. Several years ago Percy moved back to Sydney and has enjoyed the frequent hospitality of the ICC's Australian Representative David Currington. Percy was at the recent lunch and appropriately, the venue for this was an RSL club (The Returned and Services League, Australia) known as The Kirribilli Club on the north side

of Sydney Harbour. Percy will be one hundred on 27th December and must surely be the sole living member of that 1944 audience!

Keith Parkinson, by email from St. Helen's, Lancashire, UK

The latest magazine met your usual high standards and I would like to comment on two of the articles.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez's examination of the Hey Jude/Hey Bing album justly credited Glen D. Hardin's contribution as arranger. Hardin is an unsung hero in popular music. He is rarely acknowledged for the contributions he has made over the last 60 years. It is only his link with Elvis Presley that ever gets a mention. I last saw him at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall about 20 years ago when he was touring with the Crickets and Nanci Griffith. He is a musician who has kept a low profile and it is good to see Anton acknowledging his input.

Graham Pascoe's Note from Australia impressed me with the depth of research. His sales statistics of Bing's recordings make interesting reading when we so often concern ourselves with million selling records and gold discs.

Chester University Film Course for 2018 runs from Friday August 10th to Sunday August 12th. This year's topic is Films Preserved and Restored. On the Saturday evening the restored *King of Jazz* is being shown. These film weekends are friendly gatherings rather than academic courses. There is an internet website: cosmopolitan10@btinternet.com for anyone wanting further information.

Bob Grace, by email from Houston, Texas, USA

I've been watching the coverage of Royal Ascot this week and today's broadcast featured footage of celebrities of the past who attended Royal Ascot. It included color footage of Bing's attendance in 1967 as well as older, black and white footage of such actors as David Niven and Douglas Fairbanks (Sr.). I couldn't tell if this was part of the ITV coverage or if it was a cut-in specifically for the American audience (telecast over NBC). In any case, it was nice to see a few seconds of Bing at Ascot 51 years ago.

Ron McBride, by email from Olathe, Kansas, USA

Have you ever heard of Justin Wilson? He was a U.S. Cajun humorist and chef. He performed at a lot of conventions and had a cooking show on public television for awhile where he cooked Cajun dishes and told stories. I get a kick out of him so when I recently saw one of his LP's that I didn't have, I purchased it. I was very surprised when I got it home and looked at the back. To my surprise, the liner notes were written by Bing Crosby! I thought you might enjoy reading them.

In these days when we're surfeited with comedy programs on TV, on records and on films, when comedians are laboring endlessly to contrive something fresh, original and provocative, it's a welcome thing when some diligent A&R man produces a monologist who is not "sick", who is not a political satirist (though that's all good stuff), and whose material doesn't have to be a little shady to titillate his auditors. (That must be the longest sentence since Washington Irving's "Westminster Abbey".)

Well, maybe "titillate" will save it. Anyhow, Wilson certainly isn't "sick," He seems uncommonly robust, and though his subject matter is mostly about a State where politics is highly susceptible to satiric shafts, he eschews anything so obvious. Again, though he may break down and raise a few eyebrows at a local "fish fry", his material is generally as clean as Lassie's upper left incisor,

Cajun humor, Cajun dialect I don't suppose is too well known. I got a little of it on me when, in the old days, Connee Boswell used to holler such things as, "Hey, Pierre, you see my cow. Push him home, huh."

But Wilson's got the whole bit here. This is genuine. This is authentic. When my wife first heard him, she exclaimed, "'Why, he sounds just like Uncle Buck."(Uncle Buck's a big carbine and scattergun man from Georgetown} Louisiana.)

I find him very funny, and I know you will too. His delivery and his timing are truly delightful. I really think this fella could do for Louisiana what Bob Burns did for Arkansas - and that, my friends, is high praise indeed.

Bing Crosby

(Editor: What a wonderful turn of phrase Bing has! I must confess that I had never heard of Justin Wilson but I see that he passed away in 2001 at the age of 87.

I noticed a letter in the Spokane newspaper, The Spokesman-Review, on May 27 which is interesting and very welcome.)

More respect for Bing

Rodney Dangerfield is not the only entertainer who gets no respect. The greatest of all time doesn't get much, even in his hometown.

You'd expect more love for Bing Crosby, whose birthday was May 3, 1903. After all, he has sold more records than any other artist, to the tune of a billion (with a "b") in formats from 78-RPM records to digital downloads. He earned three Best Actor Oscar nominations (winning one) and sang a record 14 Oscar-nominated songs (winning another record four) in his long film career.

Besides his fame in singing and acting, he was part owner of the 1960 world champion Pittsburgh Pirates and the horse Seabiscuit (sic) and began the first pro-am

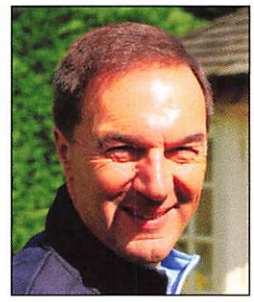
national golf tournament. Elvis Presley has a weeklong Memphis, Tennessee, festival in his hometown. Duke Ellington rates a U.S. currency portrait on a quarter, yet our musical giant has no named holidays, parks, schools or streets in Spokane. His name does adorn a downtown movie theater, plus there's a statue and his childhood home standing on his old campus at Gonzaga (which, incidentally, he pronounces "Gun-ZOG-uh").

Spokane's homebody and Zog (excuse me, Zag) dropout deserves a lot more respect.

Dale Roloff

CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland remebers an old friend



This summer I made my first visit to the Italian city of Florence. Taking a break from its boundless supply of renaissance art and architecture, I pulled up a seat in one of the hundreds of street side coffee shops and watched as three young musicians set up their stage on the pavement opposite. All were in their twenties. One, in sunglasses and sandals, strummed at a battered acoustic guitar; the second man tootled on a clarinet, but it was the third who held my interest. He was the bass player, and his instrument was nothing more than a broom handle, with an upturned refuse bin providing his echo chamber. Once set, with a hat for tips and a CD for sale on display, they started to play. The bass-man, it transpired, was also the vocalist, and despite the setting, was a Frenchman, not an Italian.

His first song immediately grabbed my attention. "Just a gigolo, everywhere I go, people know the part I'm playing" - which to most of us, means Bing, Gus Arnheim's band, Hollywood, March 1931, the same session that produced "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams". If my maths are correct, that was 87 years ago, and at least 60 years in advance of the birth of the young vocalist that now held my attention. I wondered just how much he knew about the history of the song. It was adapted in 1929 by Irving Caesar, from a melody composed the year before in Vienna by Leonello Casucci, complementing lyrics written in 1924 by Julius Brammer. Casucci's original lyric had the setting for the song as Austria, just after World War 1, but Caesar changed the setting to Paris. The song was widely recorded in the early Thirties, but the Crosby version is one of the very few that contains the full verse which gives the song its context. It's not exactly a record to listen to if you are having a bad day - indeed, some people even link its popularity to the dramatic increase in suicide rates that the USA saw in 1931 - but as an early example of Bing interpreting a lyric, it stands almost unsurpassed

As the trio progressed, the bass-man slipped into "I Ain't Got Nobody" before returning to the Gigolo, which suggested that his reference point was Louis Prima, who first put the two songs together in the mid-Fifties. But I was intrigued enough to wander over and check out the CD they had on offer. Eight songs, four of them French but also "After You've Gone", "I Found a New Baby" and, surprise, surprise, "A Ghost of a Chance". Another Crosby connection, and enough to persuade me to buy the CD, which - and I must confess a slight element of surprise at this - sounded really good when I played it on arriving back home.

I recount all of this for two reasons. One is that it is the latest example of something I have written about before, which is the great joy that comes from the fact that your hobby travels with you wherever you go. But secondly, it's the kind of story that I used to enjoy relaying to a good friend of mine who passed away in March. He was John Joyce - known always in Crosby circles as "Johnny Joyce the butcher" to distinguish him from the other John Joyce, sadly also gone, who was a printer and publisher and is the man responsible for the professional finish that our magazine has displayed for almost thirty years.

Johnny Joyce - although I only ever knew him as John - lived to the age of 92 and his passion for Bing

never wavered, even in his final years of failing health. Passion is the right word. He could never understand how the world of music could move on without Bing being centre stage and he raged - with some justification - at the way history is being re-written to position Frank Sinatra as the most popular singer of all time. John had no downer on Sinatra, but as he frequently pointed out, when it came to popularity, no-one ever approached the universal acclaim that Bing enjoyed through the war years and immediately beyond. And John knew - he was there, one of the Allied troops that landed in Normandy on D-Day - and the voice that he and his friends who survived that day, listened to, was Bing, not Frank.

John was a collector first and listener second. For most of his life, his world was that of the reel to reel tape recorder but he took to any technological update if it would bring him something he has never heard before. "Is there anything new?" was the question that he always asked, whenever I walked through his door.

The real thing that John was searching for though, was something old, not something new. After D-Day, John's life had taken a surprising turn. A young man from Wolverhampton in the English Midlands, he found himself stationed in Belgium, where he met a young girl, who eventually joined him in a marriage that lasted 69 years. And whilst in Belgium, he heard a record on the radio. The song was "In Love in Vain", a new one, written in 1946 for the movie Centennial Summer, and John was in no doubt as to the identity of the singer. It was Bing.

Once back home, John went looking for the record only to be told that Bing had not recorded it and the nearest singer who had was Dick Haymes. Years later, when the Crosby clubs started to document every aspect of Bing's output, John confidently expected the Crosby version of "In Love in Vain" to turn up on one of the many LPs of Bing's Armed Forces Radio broadcasts. It never did, and to this day, there is nothing to suggest that Bing ever sang the song.

John never gave up on his search for this elusive - and possible non-existent - Crosby piece. Perhaps he was mistaken, some other Crosbyphiles said when John regaled them with the story, or maybe he mistook Dick Haymes for Bing. I doubt it. John's ear for the nuances in Bing's voice was as good as anyone's I have ever met, as was his memory for musical detail. In all the years I knew him, he was never wrong. He would certainly never have mistaken Dick Haymes, with all due respect, for his idol.

I wish there was a happy ending that I could relate, that has the elusive Crosby track turning up to give John his satisfaction in his final years. It never did. But the story reminds us that John's pursuit of something old and something new was the thing that keeps us collectors going, the reason why, despite the treasures we hold, the latest unissued recording that suddenly appears is the thing we simply must have. It's what collecting does to us and it's why we do it.

Not too long ago, John said to me, half-jokingly, that "When I finally get upstairs, the first thing I am going to do is ask Him to play me Bing Crosby singing "In Love in Vain". I hope that John met his Maker and that he is sitting there now, enjoying his song. He might well be, because John was never wrong.

Ken Crossland ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

A Note from Australia

Graham Pascoe joins us again to offer some comments on our last issue.

I've now been able to read all of *BING* No.178 and, needless to say, I've not been disappointed. Congratulations to the editors and contributors. I'm always impressed by your ability to find such interesting content, and the great photos. It was especially interesting to read about two of Bing's movies, *The Bells of St Mary's* and *White Christmas*. I'll return to them soon.

Until I read Martin McQuade's story about the historic banjo once owned by Harper Goff I didn't think of Bing's association with that instrument. It did, however, remind me that my late father played the banjo in the 1920s. Now, back to the movies.

Australians had been rushing to their record shops to buy Bing's hit song 'The Bells of St Mary's' since June 1946 and they must have been keenly awaiting the arrival of the movie. The *Radio Times* of 24 February-2 March had asked 'Can Crosby do it again?' in its Stage and Screen column, noting that Bing had been nominated for the best actor Oscar and wondering if he could 'scoop the pool as he did last year' for his portrayal of the priest in *The Bells of St Mary's*. Towards the end of August *The Sydney Morning Herald* (*SMH*) noted that the film 'had broken all records' at the Tatler Theatre in Charing Cross Road, London

Sydney's Regent Theatre seated more than 2200 patrons and announced the arrival of the film in *The SMH* on 18 October with 'Your heart will be wearing a smile. Leo McCarey presents BING CROSBY and INGRID BERGMAN' but the review in that newspaper the following week was dismal: '... this [picture] must be considered a failure. Bing Crosby, as Father O'Malley, is still doing his good deeds, and is still in good voice, but the film appears to lack verisimilitude'. (Did that cause its readers to get out their dictionaries?) In Melbourne, 'The Chief' reviewed the film for the morning newspaper *The Age* three days after its 'Gala Premiere' at The Esquire, which seated 1576, and wrote that it 'scarcely recaptures the fine careless rapture [of *Going my way*] ... a running time of more than two hours is only achieved by judicious padding of the action ... The film has a ready-made audience of Bing Crosby's host of admirers but there is too much of it.'

There was indeed a host of admirers. The film ran for eight weeks at Sydney's Regent and six at Melbourne's Esquire. Almost twelve years later it was given a big promotion in April 1958 when it was revived in three suburban cinemas in Melbourne.

Television came to Australia in 1956, in time for the Melbourne Olympic Games. It was 1960 before Sydney folk could see the first Crosby film on 'the box' in January. It was *Birth of the Blues*. In February *The Bells of St Mary's* had the first of its thirteen appearances over the next twenty years but in December 1983 the *SMH* lamented that although 'Bing Crosby is as much a part of TV Christmas as Santa Claus ... the favourite Christmas movies for the past 10 years are having a break this year. There's no *Miracle on 34th Street,* no *The Bells of St Mary's* ... no *White Christmas* nor *Holiday Inn.*

Devin Wilger's article reproduced in *BING* noted the subplot concerning the greedy real estate developer attempting to shut down the school. In 1994 an Australian journalist looked at how Hollywood's presentation of the Catholic Church had changed over the years and suggested that a remake of *The Bells of St Mary's* would have that villain making his fortune selling cocaine and 'Father Chuck O'Malley might be expected to pull the local roughs into line with a fully-loaded Magnum'.

DECCA
MADE IN AUSTRALIA FOR
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE (AUST.) PTY. LTD. SYDNEY. N.S.W.
THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S
(Featured in RKO Film "The Bells of St. Mary's")
(Furber & Adams)
(Speed 78)
BING CROSBY, Vocal
With John Scott Trotter and His Orchestra
(L3962)
CHAPPELL'S
SYDNEY
Y5951
* COPYRIGHT RECORD - ALL RIGHTS OF THE MANUFACTURER AND THE OWNER OF THE RECORDED WORK RESERVED *
UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

As for Bing's record of the film's title song, backed by 'I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen' it became a double-sided hit record in Australia. A second record of two songs from the movie offered 'Aren't You Glad You're You' with 'The Land of Beginning Again' and both songs reached the charts but that disc sold only a quarter of the other.

In 1954 few Australians would have experienced a white Christmas but they would have been familiar with Bing's recording of the song which by then was well on the way to selling its lifetime sales of 43,000 Decca 78s,

backed by 'Let's Start the New Year Right'. (Bing's 1947 version of 'White Christmas' had not replaced the original in Australia.) David Lobosco was indeed fortunate to see the movie in a theatre last year and the fact that the audience stood up and applauded at the end of the screening obviously made a great impression on him. Had Aussie audiences done that sixty-four years earlier?

In Sydney, readers of *The SMH* had learned in December 1953 that Bing had been filming *White Christmas* as his swan song but, according to studio gossip, was having second thoughts about retirement. The music magazine *Tempo* of August 1954 reported that Bing and Danny Kaye had recently completed the film and the front cover of its November issue was a still of the closing scene showing its four stars and a children's chorus. (Of course, the film had been released in USA in October.) Almost all of the magazine's page one was devoted to a story on the movie and the career of Irving Berlin. The following month's *Music Maker* didn't give it front page treatment but most of page eleven was devoted to it including 'Bing Crosby, who introduces several new Irving Berlin songs in *White Christmas*, Paramount's first VistaVision production, has recorded approximately 1,000 songs [an understatement]... again sings the song ... originally introduced in 1942'.

For Australian audiences, the introduction of *White Christmas* was unique among Bing's feature films. On Friday 17th December it opened for its first run in Sydney at two central city cinemas simultaneously, with combined seating capacity of more than four thousand. One week later it started in Melbourne also at two city cinemas which together could seat more than 4,700 patrons. It was advertised as 'World's First Film in 1954's Miracle Medium-VistaVision'. Before looking at the audiences' responses to it, it's perhaps not surprising that critics' opinions differed. In Sydney, *The Sun-Herald* thought 'For a relaxing and sentimentalising session of the year this conventional if handsomely finished musical comedy should serve very well'. By contrast, Melbourne's evening newspaper told its readers that '... it has just about everything a musical should ask for. Yet, all in all, it falls short. Bing himself is the most disappointing of the cast ... his mind is not always with the picture.'

It must have been a success with audiences. In Sydney it ran for nine weeks at the Prince Edward and four at the Capitol, which seated almost 2,800. Melbournians kept it at the State, the country's largest theatre with a capacity over 3,300, for seven weeks and at the King's for three weeks. There are no reports of standing ovations.

Just before the movie was released in Australia a record of two other film songs was available on the Columbia label. 'Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep' with 'What Can You Do with a General?' sold moderately well. The first song made the charts in January 1955, with versions by Bing and Eddie Fisher, and remained a hit for nineteen weeks. In March of that year, Douglas Black was presenting a bi-weekly Crosby session on the Adelaide radio station 5KA, a program which he had commenced in 1949, and he had received a recorded message from Bing concerning *White Christmas*, prefaced by his greeting 'Hello, Douglas'.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez's comments on three of Bing's albums reminded me that, not surprisingly, all three were released in Australia. I have no data on their sales but some comments by Australian critics are revealing.

The first of the three to be available in Australia was *Bing with a Beat* in 1958. Anton and author Will Friedwald enthused over it as did Douglas Entwisle in *The Herald* in Melbourne. He thought that Bing and Bob Scobey's band 'concentrate on enjoying the show ... in an infectious manner'. On the other hand, when the ABC radio network's journal *The ABC Weekly* came off the press in March its critic Peter Sainthill concluded that Bing had 'reached the end of the road so far as pop singing goes ... scooping up notes and at times ... woefully flat ... Bing probably still has a song or two left in him, but please not one with a beat'.

Bing & Satchmo became available in Australia in 1961. Early in 1978 it was released again on the EMI label as *Bing and Louis Armstrong* and Christine Hogan reviewed it for *The SMH* in April in a column headed 'A renaissance of Bing Crosby'. She appreciated their revival of 'some wonderful songs from a bygone era ... Together these two great artists, both dead, still make their marks in the music world'. Incidentally, this LP included the June 1960 recording 'Lazy River' which was not on the original issue.

Hey Bing/Hey Jude! came on the London label in 1969 together with a single which offered two of the ten songs: 'Hey Jude' and 'Lonely Street'. The album reached our charts in July and stayed four weeks including a best spot at number fifteen. The single was reviewed by Crosby enthusiast Graham Reade for the Adelaide daily newspaper *The News*. Of 'Hey Jude', he wrote 'Bing glides effortlessly through John Lennon's lyrics, giving them the full leisurely, personalised Crosby treatment, and proving that his singing days are far from over, as some sceptics would have us believe'. He was also impressed by the 'very pleasant rendition' of 'Lonely Street'. The album was later released on the Bell label but only eight of the ten tracks were included.

Ken Crossland reflected on crooning and crooners after the death of Vic Damone, suggesting that in the 1920s the term 'crooning' was not intended to be complimentary. That was the case in Australia when Bing Crosby was establishing his presence in the early 1930s. They could also buy the records of others whom Ken mentions, such as 'Whispering' Jack Smith, Rudy Vallee and Gene Austin. One radio listener was moved to

write to *The SMH* in December 1933 urging that 'crooners should be all kicked, emphatically, repeatedly and with heavy boots'. In the previous year *The Australian Dance Band News* had amused its readers thus:

> Crooner: I wonder if radio in police cars is a success.
>
> Sax player: Sure. When a prisoner won't talk they threaten to tune in to a crooner.

The news that Pope Francis had approved the Degree of Heroic Virtue on the late Father Patrick Peyton reported on page 8 of *BING* would have interested many Australians. His world travels on his Family Rosary Crusades also included Australia in the early 1950s. Sydney radio station 2SM was owned by the Catholic Church and broadcast a recording of Bing saying the rosary to promote the crusade.

Nathaniel Crosby's gratitude at being named to captain the US team in the 2019 Walker Cup is understandable. In the 1980s he competed in the Australian Masters tournament. At that time Tom Ramsey was a regular contributor to *The Weekend Australian* newspaper and his column 'Golf is my game' noted Nathaniel's visit with the heading 'Crosby dynasty swings on'. Ramsey's story soon turned to Bing's prowess as a golfer. It was illustrated with a photo of Bing and film star Randolph Scott, described as 'top shooters as amateurs'.

Bob Lydon's article 'Redeeming Bing Crosby, the Voice of Christmas' which was reproduced in *BING* reminded us of the unfortunate lack of recognition of Bing's artistic accomplishments since his death. I'd like to be able to report that Bing is still mentioned favourably in Australian media but neither I nor the club's Australian/New Zealand representative have detected any significant media attention to Bing recently.

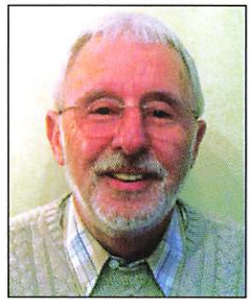
with Randolph Scott

However, to finish on a positive note, Bing was not overlooked when musicologist Gavin Ryan wrote on popular music in Melbourne's *Herald Sun* newspaper in 2005 His article 'Top of the Pops' must have amazed many readers, especially those who believed pop music began with artists such as Daddy Cool, ABBA or Wings. Addressing the question 'Who had the most number one hits in Australia?', Ryan's answer was Bing Crosby, with 27 No. 1 hits. Alongside a colour photo of Bing was Ryan's list of twenty-six songs which spent 10 or more weeks at the top of the charts. Bing's 'White Christmas' was first and his others were 'The Anniversary Song', 'I Don't Want to Walk Without You', 'Don't Fence Me In' and 'They Say It's Wonderful'.

Graham Pascoe gpascoe34@bigpond.com

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.



TV highlights - USA & Canada

Bing's films and other items seen on TV since our last issue was prepared were:

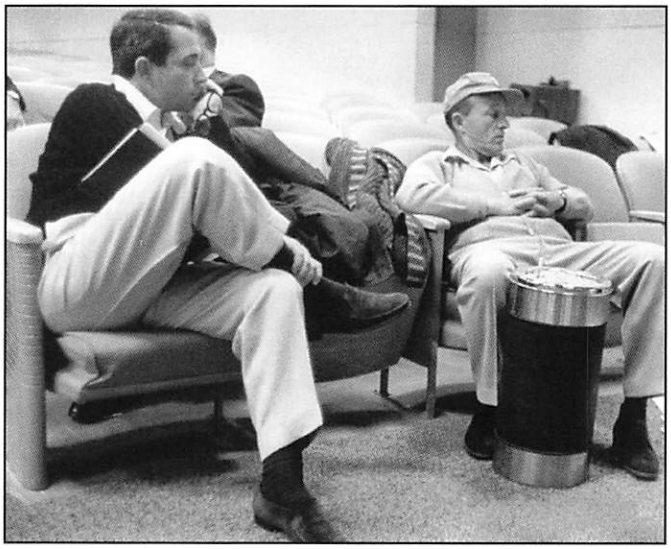
Going Hollywood	TCM
High Society	TCM
Holiday Inn	TCM
Let's Make Love	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Road to Bali	TCM
Stagecoach	STZEN

Thank goodness for TCM!

A program of special interest to Crosby fans was *Perry Como Classics: 'Till the End of Time*, a new special that premiered during the weekend of Saturday June 2 on most PBS stations. I asked Greg Van Beek to view it for us with particular emphasis on the Bing content and this is what he had to say.

> Just finished watching the Perry Como special on PBS. It was very well done. Basically a video compilation of Perry performing his biggest hits. Bing was mentioned early on by Regis Philbin, and

then a brief clip of the Bing / Perry medley from Perry's KMH in 1960 was shown. The song right before Bing sings "Where the Blue of the Night" in the medley (it fades out as Bing begins singing it). There were some rare color video tape clips from the early 1960's of Perry's TV specials for Kraft after his weekly series ended. One from 1964 had Perry singing "Everybody Loves Somebody" with Dean Martin and Carol Lawrence (I'm sure you have the air date in your book). Also Perry in color performing Irving Berlin's "All by Myself". All in all a very enjoyable 90-minute program. It will be released on DVD in due course. A DVD is already available via PBS as a pledge drive premium.



Bing and Perry relax between rehearsals in 1960

This has more Bing content....a new film documentary about Rose Marie called *Wait for Your Laugh* and available from Amazon and on Netflix and Amazon Prime. She was married to Bobby Guy, lead trumpeter in the John Scott Trotter orchestra. This was discussed, and Perry Botkin, Jr was interviewed, followed by the opening theme of one of the Chesterfield shows featuring Bobby's famous trumpet solo on "Where the Blue". There was a bit of dialogue from one of the Chesterfield shows that Rose Marie guested on, along with Bing's 1962 recording of "If I Didn't Care" playing in the background. A very good feature about a remarkable performer.

Greg Van Beek

USA & Canadian Radio

Crosby Internet Radio

Crosby Internet Radio has continued to broadcast 24/7 with a wide variety of shows including Arne Fogel's excellent "Bing Shift" programs. The shows change on a monthly basis with the 15-minute 1954-56 show typically running throughout the day with other programs such as the KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows being interleaved every hour or so. The Crosby-Clooney shows are used frequently too.

Other USA shows

Arne Fogel's weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" is on Sundays at 8 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. It can now be accessed on demand at http://www.jazz88.fm/on-demand/ and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. For the playlists go to:

http://spinitron.com/radio/playlist.php?station=kbem&sv=l&showid=66

As an example, here's the playlist for his June 10 broadcast.

> "I've Heard That Song Before" - "I Don't Want to Walk without You" - "It's Been a Long, Long Time" - "What Am I Gonna Do About You?" - "Sunday" - "The Things We Did Last Summer" - "A Man and His Dream" - "Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep" - "Rose of Mandalay" - "Nevertheless (I'm In Love with You)" - "Me and My Shadow" - "Someday Sweetheart" - "Dear Hearts and Gentle People" - "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair" - "Make Believe" - "Laugh and Call It Love"

Jack Boyle's BING *for the SEASONS* show from Hudson Valley in New York State has had a different theme each month. The March edition used an Irish theme to tie-in with St. Patrick's Day and some of the Crosby tracks heard were "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling"; The Isle of Innisfree"; "The Rose of Tralee"; and "With My Shillelagh Under My Arm". For April, Jack came up with the interesting theme of "Bing and the Girl Groups" which gave him the opportunity to highlight the groaner's work with The Boswell Sisters, The Music Maids, The Andrews Sisters and The Supremes. Songs such as "You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven" and "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" were among those used.

The merry month of May brought the title of "Chasing Rainbows" and the playlist included the likes of "Rain", "Call Me up Some Rainy Afternoon", "Singin' in the Rain" and "Where the Rainbow Ends". Jack celebrated the music of Rodgers & Hammerstein in June and Bing tracks used included "June Is Bustin' Out All Over", "If I Loved You", "People Will Say We're in Love" and "Some Enchanted Evening".

The show is now being re-formatted for possible national syndication. Further details to follow.

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series Nostalgia Radio Time on 1420 AM WJUB (and on Live365 station *920 WON: The Apple)* has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program. On St. Patrick's Day, Greg used the whole of Bing's Philco show from March 17, 1948 in his broadcast.

As is his custom, Greg mounted a birthday tribute to Bing on his April 28 show using the KFI 50th Anniversary broadcast with Bing and Ken Carpenter from April 16, 1972 which had excerpts from KMH of March 6, 1941 and from the Philco broadcast of October 6, 1948. Greg followed that with the entire Kraft show for January 13, 1944.

You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows on Greg's podcast at nostalgiaradiotime.podomatic.com.

The **Star Spangled Radio Hour** can still be heard at http://www.cruisin1430.com/media/podcast/star-spangled-radio-hour and Bing pops up now and then. On March 31, the Kraft Music Hall broadcast of April 6, 1944 was heard, then on April 14, Command Performance No, 54 from February 24, 1943 starring Bing and Dinah Shore was broadcast.

There was a notable broadcast on May 5 as our old friends abandoned their usual style, of covering old radio broadcasts, and instead honored Bing's birthday with a selection of no less than 24 studio recordings from 1928 to 1956. Surprisingly they seemed a little vague about the year of Bing's birth but they added quite a few comments about the way popular music and pop culture generally has changed.

Unfortunately your Editor has since received the following message so I will not be able to monitor the broadcasts anymore.

> *The owner of this website (www.cruisin1430.com) has banned the country or region your IP address is in (GB) from accessing this website.*

I wonder if this due to the new EU regulations regarding **GDPR** (General Data Protection Regulation)?

TV highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

The Country Girl	Sky Select

In addition, a number of Bing-related programmes are available from Sky "on demand".

Bing also popped up on the BBC2 programme *Holding Back the Years* on March 16 singing "Red Sails in the Sunset". The *Top of the Pops 1982* edition on BBC4 on March 28 included the Bing 'n' Bowie duet.

UK radio

The National Presenters

Songs played on the BBC national networks of which we were aware over the last four months were:

Elaine Paige on Sunday: I Whistle a Happy Tune (May 27)

Don Black: Moonlight Becomes You (Mar. 4)

Jools Holland: Gone Fishin' (Mar. 26)

Paul O'Grady: Let's Not Be Sensible (May 20)

DECCA
REGD.
MADE IN ENGLAND · THE DECCA RECORD CO. LTD.
45 RPM
W/T
(XDR.29064)
45-F.
21452
TRUE HIGH FIDELITY
RECORDING FIRST PUBLISHED 1962
Production :— Project Records Inc.
Chappell & Co.
ALL RIGHTS OF THE MANUFACTURER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE RECORDED WORK RESERVED · UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED
LET'S NOT BE SENSIBLE
(From The Soundtrack Of "The Road To Hong Kong")
(Cahn, Van Heusen)
BING CROSBY WITH JOAN COLLINS
Music Director :
Robert Farnon
29064-TI-1C

Keith Richmond drew my attention to a Radio4 programme on June 3 called "It's Not So Grim up North" in which a WW2 Spitfire pilot, Cunningham Castle, (aged 94) told of how he was shot down. He became a prisoner-of-war and he eventually escaped through the fence and the American camp he reached had a radio playing Bing singing "Don't Fence Me In" which he thought was rather ironic. A clip of the song was played.

The local radio presenters

The Late Paul Barnes, the big band, jazz, two-hour show hosted by Paul over seven BBC local radio stations for many years on Saturday nights ended in mid-May. Paul has decided not to continue with his show anymore for various reasons. He has been a consistent player of Crosby tracks, calling Bing "The Boss", and building a presentation around an old Crosby calendar every month using CDs from his own collection, many of which had been provided by the ICC. We shall miss him and we wish him all the best in whatever venture he decides to pursue in the future. Before he left us he had played seven Bing tracks in the current period and he also gave a sincere tribute to the late Ernest Sutkowski.

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon and Bing is featured regularly as shown below.

That's What Life Is All About (Mar. 11) (my email read out, ICC promoted) – Temptation – I Can't Get Started (Apr. 15) – Sioux City Sue – Pale Moon – When the Moon Comes over Madison Square (May 6) – Dinah (May 20) – Along the Navajo Trail (May 27) (Stan White request) – At the Jazz Band Ball – Moonlight Bay – Maria Bonita - Ol' Man River (Jun. 10) – Don't Get Around Much Anymore (Jun.10) – Red River Valley (Jun. 24) (my email read out) – Wrap Your Trouble in

Dreams (fluff – this surprised Howard somewhat as he had not heard it all the way through before!) (Jun. 24)

Gerald Jackson continues to use his two programmes on local radio - "Unforgettable" on Radio Lancashire on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m. and the other, the similarly named "Gerald Jackson: Unforgettable" on Radio Manchester on Sunday nights at 10pm to play plenty of Bing. For example: Summer Wind (Mar. 4) – Mountain Greenery (Mar. 4) – I Love You Samantha (Mar. 11) – Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (Mar. 11) - Where the Blue of the Night (Mar. 18) – Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (Apr. 8) – Two Cigarettes in the Dark (Apr. 22) – As Time Goes By (Apr. 22) – Zing a Little Zong (Apr. 29) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (May 6) – Symphony (May 20) – Far Away Places (Jun. 17) – At Last, At Last (Jun. 17) – I Haven't Time to Be a Millionaire (Jun. 17)

Bill Rennells ***Harmony Night*** show on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet is another presenter who is very happy to play Bing in response to requests.

I Whistle a Happy Tune (Mar. 4) (for me) – It Had to Be You (Mar. 4) (for Stan White) – I Don't Want to Walk Without You (Mar. 11) (for ICC member Ian Lawrence) – True Love (Apr. 8) – You Turned the Tables on Me (Apr. 15) – The Whiffenpoof Song (Apr. 15) – Ain't Doin' Bad, Doin' Nothin' (for Ian Lawrence) – Red River Valley (Jun. 3) (for me) – A Couple of Song and Dance Men (Jun. 3) (for Ian Lawrence) – Galway Bay (Jun. 17) – The Way You Look Tonight (Jun. 24) (for Ian Lawrence)

****

The BBC website has details of the Crosby songs used in the last four months and the shows playing a fair number of Bing tracks were as follows. I had emailed a number of the presenters with requests and this bore fruit on several occasions.

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music*: (BBC Radio Wales) – Zing a Little Zong (Mar. 11) – Dear Hearts and Gentle People (Apr. 15) – Road to Morocco (Apr. 15) – I'll Be Seeing You (Apr. 29) – True Love (May 6) – Gone Fishin' (May 27) – Busy Doing Nothing (Jun. 10)

David Allen: (BBC Radio Surrey) – Pennies from Heaven (Mar 10) – I Whistle a Happy Tune (Mar. 17) (my email read out) – Busy Doing Nothing (Mar. 31) – True Love (Apr. 28) – That's What Life Is All About (June 2) – Red River Valley (June 2) (my email read out) - That's What Life Is All About (June 30)

Roy Noble: (BBC Radio Wales) – Gone Fishin' (Mar. 18) – Begin the Beguine (Apr. 8) - Where the Blue of the Night (May 20) – Chicago Style (May 20) – Swinging on a Star (May 20)

Michael Poulter: (BBC Tees) – In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (Mar. 4) – Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella (Mar. 11) – I Whistle a Happy Tune (Apr. 1) (my email read out) – Now Is the Hour (Apr. 15) – Play a Simple Melody (Apr. 22) – Sentimental Music (May 20) – When My Baby Smiles at Me (May 27)

Australia

Each Monday morning from 9 to 11 (Australian Eastern Time) ICC member **Graham Pascoe** presents 'Morning Music' on community radio station 2MCE-FM, located in Bathurst, New South Wales on the campus of Charles Sturt University. Usually he plays recordings of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Needless to say, he usually plays a couple of Crosby recordings. The station broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Bathurst and its programmes are streamed (but not archived) on www.2mce.org.

Malcolm Macfarlane macwilmslo@aol.com

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

Bing (aged 15) made the Junior Yard Association baseball team at Gonzaga. He achieved "First Honors" in English in Second Year High School, Division Two and "Next in Merit" behind the gold medal winner in Elocution. After Commencement Day on June 12, he obtained a part-time job as a caddy at the local municipal golf course.

75 YEARS AGO

On May 6, 1943, Bing (just aged 40) and Dixie, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Gibson and Barney Dean, arrived in New Orleans from San Antonio in Texas. The next day Bing and Bob Hope took part in a benefit golf match at the City Park No. 1 golf course, New Orleans. A crowd of over 3,000 produced $2,500 for the Red Cross motor corps. Bing and Bob entertained the crowd and led an auction of items (including Bing's tie) for war bonds. Accompanied by guitarist Tony Romano, Bing sang "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans." At 8:30 p.m. Bing and Bob led a parade around City Park Stadium in front of 10,000 people. They went on to headline a show in the stadium and Bing again sang "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans" plus "As Time Goes By" and "White Christmas." Bing and Dixie left for Atlanta after the show.

On May 16, Bing was in Chicago at Soldier Field to celebrate the third annual observance of "I Am an American Day" and sang in front of an audience of 130,000. That night he acted as guest quiz master on the *Quiz Kids* radio program. Bing and Dixie went on to

New York and were seen at Belmont Park racecourse. They also dined at the Stork Club while in New York.

Bing then moved on to Philadelphia where he joined up with Bob Hope. After entertaining in the Four Freedoms War Bond Show at the Strawbridge and Clothier Department Store, they went to Llanerch Country Club to put on a Navy Service League Show with Frances Langford and Jerry Colonna for the Philadelphia Recruiting Office. A five-hole golf match followed and a crowd of 6,000 watched the proceedings in pouring rain. War bonds worth $130,000 were sold.

Our man then travelled by train to Memphis where he was to take part in a golf match with Bob Hope but unfortunately Hope's plane was grounded in Atlanta by poor weather. Bing duly played with Byron Nelson against Ed Dudley and a local pro at the Memphis Country Club before a crowd of 10,000. After the golf, Bing put on a forty-five-minute show at the course singing "Miss You," "As Time Goes By," "Please," and "White Christmas" accompanied by the staff orchestra of radio station WMC. He finished the day by entertaining wounded soldiers at Kennedy General Hospital before catching the 8:14 p.m. train for the long journey to Washington D.C.

> Skies were threatening when the sale started, but Bing persuaded the crowd to ignore the possibility of rain and entertained it right merrily for three-quarters of an hour. He sang requests readily, with none of the pseudo-reluctance usually affected by the celebrity coaxed to perform at such gatherings. He didn't worry about keys, either. The band, recruited for the occasion from the staffs of WMC and WREC, naturally didn't have arrangements in Bing's keys, but the crooner picked what he thought was a fairly comfortable range, hummed a note until the band had the key set, and then launched into it. The crowd remained captivated until Bing announced his time was up.
> (*Memphis Press-Scimitar*, May 24, 1943)

On May 24, Bing was at Griffith Stadium in Washington D.C., where he Babe Ruth, and Kate Smith entertained the 29,221 crowd at a baseball game. Going on to Belmont Park in New York a few days later he saw one of his horses "Don Bingo" win the $3,000 Glorifier-Handicap. Then he travelled to Atlanta to join up with Bob Hope again and they played in an exhibition golf match for the benefit of the Red Cross at the Capitol City Country Club before a crowd of around 10,000 which was then the largest gallery in Atlanta golf history. During the show at the course after the golf, Bing sang "White Christmas." Over $300,000 worth of war bonds were sold at the event.

On June 1, Bing was in Birmingham, Alabama, and at 12:00 noon he presented a Minute Man award at the Bechtel-McCone-Parsons aircraft division plant. Tentative plans for a benefit golf match in Birmingham had fallen through and at short notice, Bing went on to entertain the WAACs at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. After a short rehearsal with a pianist, Bing performed before a crowd of around 5,000 in the outdoor theater singing "Stardust," "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," "Dinah," "As Time Goes By," and "White Christmas.".

Bing with the WAACs at Fort Oglethorpe

The next day he was taken to Nashville where he participated in a golf match in front of a crowd of 5,000. Bing gave a short show afterwards on the course and auctioned various items to help sell war bonds. It is estimated that $500,000 of war bonds were sold.

> He was marvelous at the bond auction. Immediately, when he walked out on the platform and took over the microphone, he captivated the crowd. His easy manner endears him to you. Never have I seen a more receptive audience. . . . In twelve years of sports writing, this person has never met a man of Crosby's personality, He's the most sincere, easiest to talk with, individual I've ever had the pleasure of contacting—absolutely tops.
> (Bob Rule, *Nashville Tennessean*, June 3, 1943)

On June 17, Bing returned to the weekly ***Kraft Music Hall*** on NBC with Eddie Bracken as the guest. Other guests in the ensuing weeks were Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Ed Brophy, Falstaff Openshaw, Raymond Walburn, Bill Frawley, Rags Ragland and Ed Gardner. Der Bingle was also recording *Command Performance* broadcasts around this time as well.

Bing's film *Dixie* was released towards the end of June. Critical reaction was mixed with *Variety* magazine saying:

> *Dixie* is a Technicolorful money-getter, ideal for the summer b.o. It has charm, lightness, good new songs by Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, the classic oldies by Dan Emmett ('Dixie'), and some spirituals such as 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot.' And it has Bing Crosby and

Dorothy Lamour for the marquee…
(*Variety*, June 30, 1943)

Bosley Crowther writing in the *New York Times* was unimpressed though.

"…And when Bashful Bing is warbling such sparkless but adequate songs as "Sunday, Monday or Always", "She's From Missouri" or "A Horse That Knows the Way Back Home", it is easy to sit back and listen. There is also a dash of liveliness in the wholly apocryphal climax which pretends to show how "Dixie" was born.

But when the story goes weakly meandering into a pointless, confused romance between Dan and a New Orleans hoyden, played airily by Dorothy Lamour, and then marries him off to an old sweetheart who is crippled (Marjorie Reynolds), it is labored and dull...
(Bosley Crowther, *New York Times*, June 24, 1943)

On June 30, Bing sang in a two hour star-studded show from the Hollywood Bowl in front of 20,000 people to launch the "Build the Cruiser Los Angeles" campaign.

The groaner recorded "Sunday, Monday or Always" on July 2 with only a vocal group accompaniment from the Ken Darby Singers because of the continuing musicians ban. The song spent seven weeks at the top of the Billboard Best-Sellers list during its 19 weeks in the charts.

Two days later, Bing joined Al Rinker and Harry Barris in a Rhythm Boys reunion on Paul Whiteman's summer radio program *Paul Whiteman Presents.* Dinah Shore was also on the show and she and Bing sang a medley from *Porgy and Bess*. It is said that Bing refused his fee of $5,000 and asked for it to be split between Barris and Rinker.

Chase and Sanborn Summer series (NBC) still has eight weeks to go but it still seems a good bet that it reached the acme of musical entertainment, as far as this series is concerned, on last Sunday's (4th) broadcast. Everything meshed so perfectly and the performance produced such rare enjoyment in the genre of popular music, that it's hard to conceive other show's pilots even coming within reaching distance of this event.

The program was divided into two sections, and each was a darb of showmanship and execution. The first section offered a revival of the original Rhythm Boys; namely Bing Crosby, Al Rinker and Harry Barris and the ten minutes of raillery vocalizing and special business that ensued was a treat of uncommon dimensions. The trio's interpretation of "Mississippi Mud" would undoubtedly become a must for record collectors if it were recorded.

It was in the second section that the program took off to the heights of brilliant musical entertainment. The scripted material was amended from George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and what Dinah Shore and Crosby, supported by Paul Whiteman's sterling orchestral background, did with the vocals can best be described by borrowing a phrase from the Swing and its lexicon, namely "out of this world."
(*Variety*, July 7, 1943)

Paul Whiteman reunites his Rhythm Boys

Early in August, Bing started filming *Going My Way* with Barry Fitzgerald, Frank McHugh, and Rise Stevens. The director was Leo McCarey and Robert Emmett Dolan was musical director. The golfing scenes were shot at the Riviera Golf Club whilst external scenes around the fictional "St. Dominic's" were filmed at Saint Monica Church, 725 California St., Santa Monica. Filming continued until October.

A recording session on August 23 with Trudy Erwin, produced "People Will Say We're in Love" and "Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin" with only a vocal accompaniment from the Sportsmen Glee Club. "People Will Say We're in Love" reached the No. 2 spot during its 17 weeks in the charts, whilst "Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'" peaked separately at No. 4 during its 13 weeks spell.

50 YEARS AGO

The Ed Sullivan Show on CBS-TV on May 5, 1968 featured Bing's taped tribute to Irving Berlin on his eightieth birthday. Kathryn and Bing (aged 65) were in Mexico for most of May, only flying home to Hillsborough at the end of the month. In June, Bing and Kathryn plus their children flew to the Big Island in Hawaii where they stayed at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel with their friends Francis Brown and Winona Love.

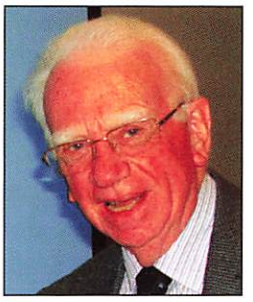
Towards the end of July, Bing and Kathryn had a few days' vacation on Long Island (at Locust Valley) before leaving for Switzerland and then flying to Nairobi in Kenya. They spent two weeks on safari in Kenya with Vic Bergeron (Trader Vic) and Helen, plus Lawrence and Leonora Wood. The safari was led by Terry Mathews of Mathews Safaris. Bing subsequently made a private

recording to commemorate the holiday for the participants and Trader Vic distributed this to many friends.

On August 14, 1968, Bing and Kathryn left Kenya for London where they stayed at the Connaught for six days. During their stay, they attended the Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall which featured the music of Sir William Walton and they saw Canterbury Tales at the Phoenix. Crosby fans Les Gaylor and Ralph Harding met up with Bing at the Connaught at various times. On August 21, Bing and Kathryn left London for two days in Portugal before flying to Florida for a short break there.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks in vain for new releases.



I fear that this time around we are in a vast parched desert scattered with piles of rubbish.

COMPACT DISCS

There is nothing new of any consequence to report, despite several trawls through all the nooks and crannies of the Internet and examination of the listings of all the most supportive CD publishers. Nothing has been reported either by my informal platoon of informants.

I will mention that at the time of writing Mosaic are offering their wonderful 7-CD set *The Bing Crosby CBS Radio Recordings (1954-56)* which is normally listed at $119, for $99, but whether this offer will remain open by the time you read this is open to some doubt as it is shown as a "June offer".

http://www.mosaicrecords.com/prodinfo.asp?number=245-MD-CD

For the rest I have to say that whilst there are many compilation CDs of Bing around, most of them share all the features that I have come to dread – poorly put together selections of the most popular songs without any "added value" such as informative or perceptive notes, frequently with audio that has been tweaked in deceptive ways in order to sound good on mediocre players, and sold at rock bottom prices. You get what you pay for!

DVDs and BLU-RAY

At least there is something to say here though not much. *King of Jazz,* reported on last time and which Martin McQuade has reviewed earlier in this issue, will, by the time you see this, have been released for Region B. A correspondent has made the interesting point that the re-processed film can be proven to be of better quality than the original, because the colour system used involved gumming two different coloured layers of film together. When displayed, the gum between the layers inevitably distorted the image and additionally the two layers rarely lined up precisely. The reprocessed version was made by parting the two original strips, cleaning them up and digitally re-combining them. Whatever, you're in for a treat of early colour spectacle,

THE INTERNET

Bing and Carol at work.

The Carol Burnett Show. A press release of 8 March stated "*Never Before Available on Digital Platforms, THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW: THE LOST EPISODES, Premieres on iTunes and Amazon on 3/9".* After 9th March individual shows and groups of episodes are available on the two platforms. The selection in volume I includes Bing who appeared on the show twice, on 10 November 1969 and 15th March 1972. As the press notice mentions the first five seasons I assume that the 1969 show is implied (the series ran from 1967).

Noted on eBay – a copy of Malcolm's *Day by Day* at a "buy it now" price of $749.35 (or $35 for 24 months!). Malcolm regrets that he is unable to find a forgotten stash of the book! Also noted was a Hollywood Palace TV script in a blue binder gold blocked with Bing's name at $3,000. As usual there are large numbers of items offered by opportunistic hopefuls frequently with such descriptions as "rare" (often when they are not), and increasing numbers mis-describing 78 rpm shellac discs as vinyl and even as LPs.

My unsuccessful exploration of the depths of the Internet in search of interesting CDs has tended to confirm my growing fears that CDs are reaching the end of their life. It is now 36 years since they were

introduced so they have done quite well (acoustic 78s lasted about 25 years; electrically recorded 78s also 25; LP 50 plus; stereo LP 40 plus, and other formats which have fallen away). These timespans are a little subjective as there can be quite a long "tail", which is especially true of the LP. As with the earlier formats, technology has overtaken our nice little silver discs and some modern digital formats available in download form achieve far more refined sound when played over quality systems. (By the way, two of my older (non-Bing) CDs have not survived. They developed a bronze-brown sheen and when held to the light you could see numbers of spots of light shining through. Playing them produced endless skipping and repeats. Well-treated vinyl manages better).

Many publishers make recent recordings available in such forms as ALAC or FLAC, with higher bit and sampling rates, giving wider frequency and dynamic ranges with lower distortion. When combined with the convenience of portability the attractions become obvious, and downloadable top quality booklets in pdf form are usually included. Those who are still attached to physical discs have SACD and Audio DVD, which, whilst small niche markets. are capable of similar quality. All have the possibility of multi-channel sound. Unfortunately few of Bing's recordings are likely to benefit from such treatments – possibly a very few recorded in the last few years up to that day in October 1977 if the original master tapes still exist. Unhappily so far as Bing's recordings go, the Internet remains like so many CD offerings. Just about anyone can throw a compilation together without discrimination and download onto some of the major platforms. Unless challenged they will receive credits. And almost always these are in MP3 format (itself now very ancient) which at its best is compressed and is often highly compressed. At its best MP3 can be quite good but cannot avoid the fact that, like CD, there are distinct technical limitations.

Richard Baker bakerstonb@gmail.com

STOP PRESS - THE BEST OF THE BING CROSBY SPECIALS

Just when we thought that there was nothing new, and with the magazine already at the printers, we got this late news from David Lobosco about a wonderful Time Life DVD set. Here's an extract from the publicity.

"From the 1950s through the '70s Bing Crosby starred in 30 highly rated TV specials that featured a who's who of guest stars. Bing's groundbreaking broadcasts have never been available in one comprehensive collection—until now. ***The Best of the Bing Crosby Specials*** DVD collection features all of Bing's iconic hits. You'll get 26 Episodes on 11 DVDs, featuring the very best of Bing's acclaimed specials, along with hours of bonus features. Highlights include:

Bing's first TV special from 1954, featuring good pal **Jack Benny** - Bing's last TV special, featuring an unlikely guest, **David Bowie**. - *Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank*—a rare special with **Frank Sinatra** - Bing's 50th anniversary special, featuring **Bob Hope**, **Rosemary Clooney**, the **Mills Brothers** and others, and including a memorable **Bette Midler**. - Episodes of *The Carol Burnett Show* and the Bob Hope TV specials with guest shots by Bing. - **Free bonus DVD**—*The Legendary Bing Crosby,* a celebration of Bing's life. - **Exclusive 36-page book:** Bing Crosby: A Life in Pictures, featuring rare photos, memorabilia, and behind-the-scenes snapshots from Bing's 60+ year career."

BUT, TimeLife.com can only process service requests for and ship items to addresses in the United States and Canada. Due to copyright and licensing laws, not all products available at TimeLife.com are available for sale in other countries. A solution for non-USA residents would be to send the funds to a USA or Canada resident for them to purchase the item on your behalf but keep in view that those living in the EU may be charged VAT on the item when it arrives. The original website link for the set quickly disappeared but hopefully has now been reinstated.

I understand that previous TimeLife sets have been edited due to copyright reasons and a one hour show can typically run for 40 minutes. I do not know whether this is the case with the Crosby set and we await further information.

In the meantime, Bob Grace has sent details of a good offer from Barnes & Noble They are currently having a 50% off sale on Criterion videos through August 6. Consequently, the recently released Blu-ray version of *The King of Jazz* is now $19.99. (This is a Region A video.)

Bing Crosby

February 13, 1976

Dear Connee:

I'm sorry to hear that you're hospitalized and that you had to have some surgery done. I hope that everything came out in good shape and that you're recovering nicely and will soon be up and around and at 'em again!

I'm glad that you got some solace from the letter I wrote you at the time of Harry's passing. He was a great man, and I know how close you were and what a great loss it must be to you to have him gone.

I'm still doing a little work now and then. A few television shows, a concert here and there - not too much. Nothing that will interfere with golf, fishing, shooting or travel!

The kids give some promise in the direction of show business, particularly Harry who plays very good guitar and piano and also can arrange and compose now and is contemplating going back to Juilliard or one of the big Music Schools in the East to get a good solid musical background for later development as a composer, arranger, etc.

I'll say a prayer for you Constance. Stay in there and keep pitchin'=

Always your buddy,

Bing

Bing Crosby

Miss Connee Boswell
Mt. Sinai Hospital Room K732
Fifth Avenue and 100th Street
New York, New York 10029